This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

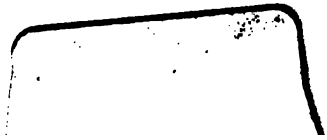
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

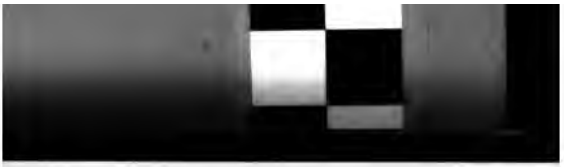
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

A 461879

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
1817
LIBRARIES





THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN SKINNER,

EPISCOPAL CLERGYMAN IN LONGSIDE, ABERDEENSHIRE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED, A BIOGRAPHICAL

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

Δι' αυτης—' αποθανων ετι λαλειται '——

BY THESE—' HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH.'—Heb. xi. 4.

VOL. I.

ABERDEEN:
Printed by J. Chalmers & Co.
AND SOLD BY F. AND C. RIVINGTONS, LONDON;
S. CHEYNE, EDINBURGH;——AND
A. BROWN, ABERDEEN.

1809.

BX
5255
S63
v.1

754797-190

TO THE REVEREND

The Episcopal Clergy of the Diocese of Aberdeen,

THE EDITOR RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBES

THE FOLLOWING

THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF

A REVERED BROTHER,

A LONG APPROVED AND STEADY FRIEND,

WHOSE ZEAL, STRICTLY 'ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE,'

AND

WHOSE CONSEQUENT ATTACHMENT TO THE CAUSE

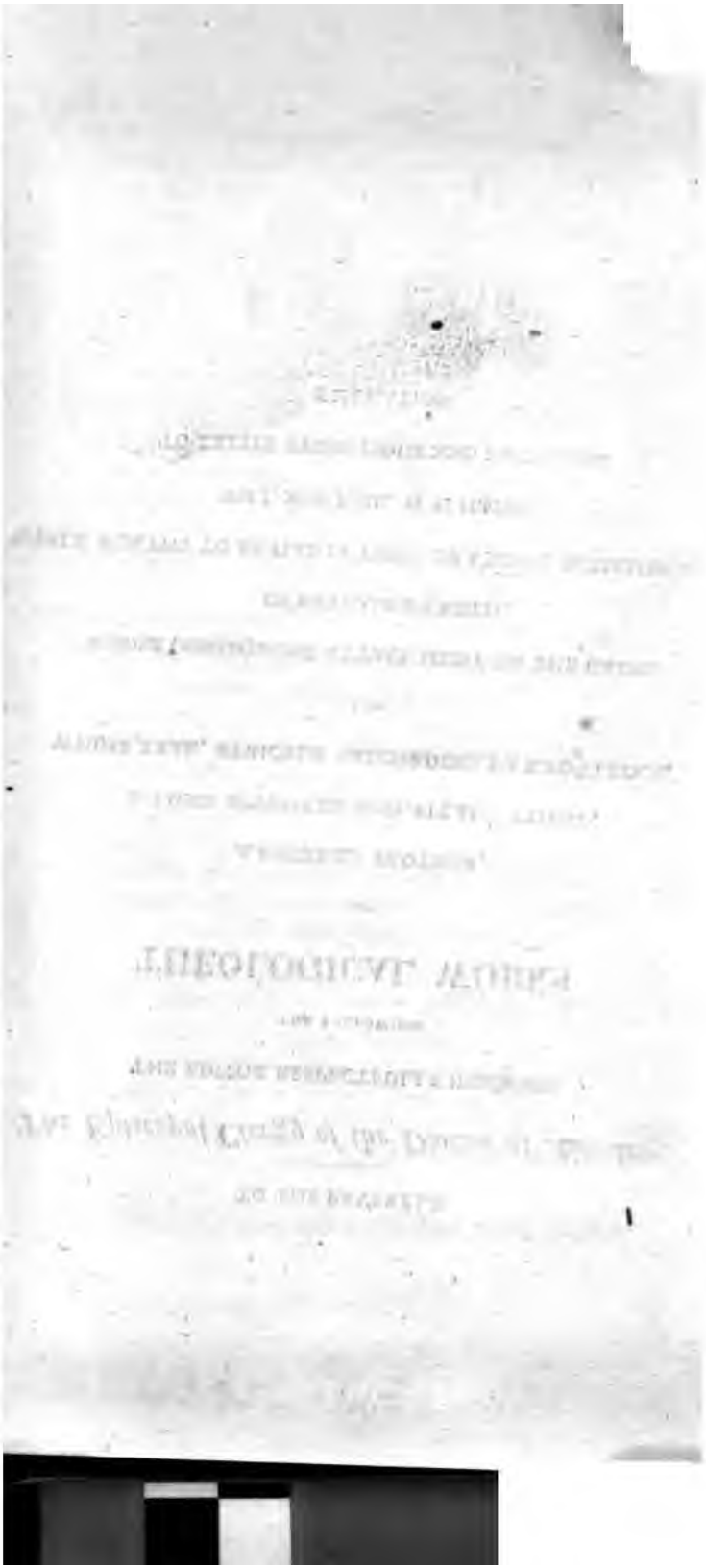
OF REVEALED TRUTH,

WHILE WORTHY TO BE HAD IN THEIR GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE,

WILL NOT FAIL, IT IS HOPED,

TO EXCITE THEIR PIOUS AND UNCEASING

EMULATION.



CONTENTS OF THIS VOLUME.

Page.

BIOGRAPHICAL Memoir—containing an account of the Life, Studies, Writings, Correspondence, and Character of the Author. . . . . iii—ccxiv

LETTERS—addressed to Candidates for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church of Scotland.

LETTER I.

Christian belief of ONE, SUPREME, SELF-EXISTENT ESSENCE—not deducible from reason, or the light of nature—taught by revelation—shewing a TRINITY of Persons in JEHOVAH—different opinions respecting their mode of existence. - . 1—6

LETTER II.

Doctrine of *Eternal Generation*—on what founded—how explained—by Dr. Bull—finding fault with a saying of *Tertullian*, and calling it a "monstrous effatum." . . . . . 7—15

LETTER III.

Title—"*Son of God*"—how to be understood—not of his Deity—as we never say, *Father of God*—how St. John introduces the *only begotten of the Father*—the primitive Fathers appealed to—Ignatius speaks of Christ as BEGOTTEN, and *not Begotten*—contradicted by Drs. Bull and Waterland—*Eternal Generation* neither the language, nor doctrine of Ignatius. . . . 15—26

LETTER IV.

The Apostolical Constitutions not friendly to Eternal Generation—neither the COUNCIL of NICE—the Greek language not sufficiently expressive of the distinctive energy of the Hebrew. 27—33

LETTER V.

Nicene Creed farther considered—meaning of the clause "be-" gotten of his Father before all worlds"—begotten into the office of man's Redeemer—why said to be "God of God"—explained by Ignatius—"Light of Light," properly "Lumen "ex Luce"—the clause "begotten not made" descriptive of our Saviour's incarnation—as "of one substance with the Fa-

Page.

"ther" is of his divinity—elucidated by Tertullian—Anathema of the Nicene Council against those who should say—"*before he was begotten, he was not.*" . . . . . 33—44

LETTER VI.

Athanasius thought favourable to "Eternal Generation"—also Theodoret of Cyrus—and Pope Gelasius—Athanasius, as quoted by Beza, contradicts himself—modern writers—Drs. Bull and Felton contradict one another—well-founded opinion of Hilary of Poictiers respecting the *real* Deity of Jesus Christ. 44—54

LETTER VII.

Opinion of Photinus Bishop of Firmium not favourable to "Eternal Generation"—jarring accounts of his condemnation—something like the doctrine of "Eternal Generation" appearing in the fourth century—little heard of in the five following centuries—occupied with disputes about other matters. 55—63

LETTER VIII.

"Eternal Generation" supported by the authority of the Romish Church—not much noticed by the Reformers—how received in Scotland and England—adopted by the Westminster Assembly—how explained by Bishop Pearson and Mr Reeves. 64—72

LETTER IX.

Dangerous consequences of the doctrine of "Eternal Generation"—*Subordination*, and hence *inferiority* in Deity—how insisted on by Dr. Bull—his thesis considered, that "God the Father, even according to his divinity, is greater "than the Son"—this, the opinion of Dr. Samuel Clarke—controverted by Dr. Brown, Bishop of Cork and Ross—and by Dr. John Edwards of Cambridge—and Dr. Bennet of Colchester—asserting, that the scriptures nowhere mention any *derivation*, or *subordination* in the Trinity. . . . . 72—90

LETTER X.

Introduction of the term "Eternal Generation" owing to three causes—1. The Platonic Philosophy—improving on the system of generated Deities—2. The translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek—instances produced of its deviating from the original—3. The much misunderstood doctrine of "*Angels.*" . . . . . 91—100

LETTER XI.

Application of the arguments and facts already adduced—influence

Page.

ence of the Platonic Philosophy on Justin Martyr—shameful panegyric on Socrates by Mr. Reeves—generation *in*, or *of* Deity, peculiar to the Platonic school of Alexandria—hence the doctrine of *inferiority* in Deity, espoused by Dr. Bull—borrowed from Clemens Alexandrinus—and, though without proof, said to be adopted by others. . . . . 101—116

LETTER XII.

Objectionable assertions respecting the eternal filiation of the Logos—supposed Creed of Gregory Thaumaturgus speaks of the *Son* as *God*, but never of the *Father of God*—Dr. Allix confounds the terms *Word* and *Son*—great mistakes about angelic Appearances—leading to the mistaken idea of subordination in Deity—conveyed in some parts of the Septuagint Translation. . . . . 117—131

LETTER XIII.

Drs. Bull and Allix, great admirers of Philo the Jew—as he was of Plato's philosophy—Objectionable passages in Dr. Scott's "Christian Life"—particularly what he says of the "*ministry of the Holy Ghost*"—how improper to place angels, as *ministering spirits*, in the same scale with *the Holy Ghost the Comforter*. . . . . 132—143

LETTER XIV.

The Author's apology for differing in opinion from so many learned men—allows his just share of merit to Athanasius, but cannot go all the lengths in his praise that some have gone—thinks the language of Ignatius entitled to as much respect as that of Athanasius—offers two observations on "the testimony of the Fathers," as necessary to be attended to. . 143—152

LETTER XV.

Information afforded by scripture on this fundamental doctrine of a TRINITY IN UNITY—the Bible presents us with two emphatical words, JEHOVAH, and ALEIM, the former denoting the *self-existence*, or *self-essence* of Deity—the latter the *relation* in which he has revealed himself to man—peculiar character of the name JEHOVAH—not properly translated LORD—the word ALEIM properly defined—expressive of a peculiar relation to man—not rightly translated GOD. . . . . 152—163

Page,

LETTER XVI.

Mistakes of Dr. Clarke, from not attending to the meaning of the Hebrew titles ALEIM, and JEHOVAH—appearance to Abraham of the adorable THREE in ONE—the Three ALEIM in One JEHOVAH. . . . . 164—172

LETTER XVII.

How the TRINITY is revealed in the Hebrew scriptures—without any allusion to "generation," "filiation," "sonship," &c.—other two words explained, ADONI, and ALUE—both restrictively applied to CHRIST the redeeming Person—the former expressive of his *dominion, lordship,* or *authority*—the latter pointing him out as the one *bound,* or *engaged* by *oath* to the work of man's redemption. . . . . 173—185

LETTER XVIII.

The redeeming One thus represented—as *Jehovah,* he EXISTS; as *Adoni,* he ACTS; as *Alue,* he SUFFERS—no mention made of him as *secondary,* or *inferior*—the word for *Heavens* SHEMIM plural, and said to declare the glory of God—how they exhibit a *Trinity*—various representations of this doctrine—no *precedency,* or *postcedency* to be understood by the terms "first," "second," and "third" Persons. . . . . 185—199

LETTER XIX.

Objections considered—any appearance of *subordination* removed by a proper view of the divine *œconomy*—Dr. Bull's mistaken idea of the divine *Monarchy* considered—no danger of *Tritheism* to be apprehended from a right view of the THREE in JEHOVAH—three ALEIM, but not three GODS. . . . 199—212

LETTER XX.

Great importance of the true meaning of the scripture titles of JEHOVAH, and ALEIM—a *Trinity* of ALEIM, or *Confederates* in *One* JEHOVAH—peculiar shares of office to all the *Three*—no *subordination,* or *inferiority,* but what arises from the œconomy of these offices—this œconomical distinction at last to cease, when Jehovah shall be ALL in ALL. . . . . 212—221

LETTER XXI.

The plan of the "Divine Oeconomy" clearly laid down in the *Creeds,*

Page.

Creeds, and *Liturgies* of the church—this exemplified in the Apostles, and Nicene *Creeds*—in the *Lord's Prayer*—the *Litany*—and *Eucharistic Service*—two objections considered—and this branch of the subject concluded by two apposite quotations from Dr. Waterland. . . . . 222—238

LETTER XXII.

Creation and Fall of Man—his fall productive of that hereditary guilt which is called ORIGINAL SIN—this doctrine combated by Pelagius, and his followers—defended by Augustine and others—sin stands in need of forgiveness—justice requires atonement—this the subject of a divine covenant, not *with*, but *for* man—the benefits of it alluded to by the Greeks and Romans—*Purification*, its grand original object. . . . 239—249

LETTER XXIII.

As the one Christ is the author of redemption, so is the Holy Ghost the author of sanctification to the church of Christ—definition of the term CHURCH as applied to the mystical body of Christ—why said to be *holy*—why *catholic*—a visible society—militant here on earth—but not yet triumphant—no foundation for the Pope's supremacy over it, nor for his infallibility in it. . . . . 250—261

LETTER XXIV.

Unity of the church—in its foundation—its doctrine—its form of government—its participation of the same sacraments—performing the same devotions—expecting the same salvation—sin of schism defined—title of *Patriarch* introduced—afterwards that of *Pope*—usurped by the Roman Pontiff, as *Universal Bishop*—his unwarrantable proceedings in support of that claim 262—274

LETTER XXV.

Duty of keeping in *communion* with the church—danger of breaking off from it—through fear of being branded with *bigotry*—*intolerance* and *illiberality*—necessity of preserving the *apostolic constitution* of the church—or the government of it by *Bishops*—*Episcopacy* sanctioned by *antiquity*, *universality*, and *consent*—not to be sacrificed to what is called "*liberal* "*sentiment*." . . . . 275—286

LET-

Page.

LETTER XXVI.

Means of admission into the christian church, and of being preserved in union with it—are positive rites called *Sacraments*—*Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*—no church without sacraments—no real sacraments without a church—the term *sacrament* not quite applicable to the two grand institutions to which it has been appropriated—the dispensation of these institutions committed to those whom Christ has entrusted with the stewardship of his mysteries—and with the external government of the household of faith. . . . . 287—294

LETTER XXVII.

Baptism the appointed means of initiation into the christian church—the *matter* and *form* of this institution to be carefully observed—and the authority of the *administrator* to be no less carefully attended to—Baptism to be followed by *confirmation*, or laying on of hands, as one of the "fundamental principles "of the doctrine of Christ"—various mistakes with regard to the nature and design of Baptism. . . . . 294—305

LETTER XXVIII.

Consideration of the mysterious institution of the *Lord's Supper*, or *Holy Eucharist*—to be viewed, first, as a *commemorative sacrifice*, or *sacrificial commemoration* of the death of Christ—and secondly, as a heavenly repast, or *feast* upon this commemorative sacrifice—view of the Romish absurd doctrine of Transubstantiation, with its lamentable consequences—of the effrontery and cruelty of denying the cup to the laity—remarks on *infant communion*, as neither necessary, nor expedient. . . . . 306—322

LETTER XXIX.

Efficacy of the christian sacraments—the work of the Institutor—of the administrator—of the partaker—error of the *Anabaptists—acceptable* more proper than *worthy* communicants—what we are to understand by the *wedding garment* in the parable—regard to be shewn to the *office*, more than to the *merits* of the administrator. . . . . 323—335

LETTER XXX.

Dangerous doctrine respecting the "*Perseverance of the Saints*" —and

Page.

—and that they who "*fall from grace can never be restored, "but must inevitably perish*"—what is meant by the "*sin a-"gainst the Holy Ghost*"—church discipline necessary—how to be exercised in *excommunication.* - . . . . . 335—342

LETTER XXXI.

The *nature* and *necessity* of GOOD WORKS—equally guarded against the *Antinomian* error—and that of *supererogation*—unfounded distinction between *moral* and *positive* obligation—what God has *commanded* is *good*—what he has *forbidden* is *evil*—sound doctrine of the Church of England respecting "*works done before the grace of Christ*"—necessity of a right christian faith. . . . . 343—351

LETTER XXXII.

JUSTIFICATION by *faith*, the true christian doctrine—no contrariety between St Paul and St. James on this subject—the terms connected with it ought to be rightly defined—"*justification*," "*faith*," and "*works*"—each of these examined, and the whole pointing out the sense in which justification by faith is to be understood—by faith, not as the cause of justification—but as the instrument whereby that blessing is extended to christians, through the righteousness of their Redeemer. . . 352—366

LETTER XXXIII.

The impossibility of keeping God's commandments—the language of many—and received by some as an article of faith—yet not warranted by scripture—nor conducive to edification—thro' the strengthening grace of Christ, all things may be done which are required of christians—that grace however not *irresistible*—lest christians should be thereby led into security. 366—378

LETTER XXXIV.

PREDESTINATION, a doctrine neither clear in itself, nor comfortable to man—was little known in the primitive church, till espoused by Augustine—the Romanists divided about it, while the Pope has either not cared, or not dared to determine on which side the truth lies—Calvin, and his followers, have carried this doctrine to its greatest height of election and reprobation—while the Church of England has cautiously kept to the general tenor of scripture, and says not a word of *reprobation*—

Page.

tion—not so the "Westminster Confession of Faith," the doctrinal standard of the Scotch Establishment. . . . . 379—394

LETTER XXXV.

The doctrine of *Predestination* founded in a perversion of scripture—the predestinarian resolves every thing into God's *secret* and *irreversible decrees*—gives such an account of this decreeing God as savours of Socinianism—and makes that to be for the "manifestation of God's GLORY," which entirely excludes the manifestation of his MERCY. . . . . 394—405

LETTER XXXVI.

WORSHIP, an institution of divine appointment—by which mankind have access to Jehovah, and communication with him the only true God—worship is of two kinds—*private* and *public*—and consists of *confession, praise,* and *prayer*—origin of these cannot be ascribed to *natural religion*—so must be from *divine revelation*—*public* worship most properly performed by a pre-composed Liturgy—and to be considered as a most invaluable blessing. . . . . 406—421

LETTER XXXVII.

The SCRIPTURES of the *Old* and *New* Testament—proved to be from divine inspiration—embracing all necessary points of faith and practice—to the canonical books of the Old Testament the Church of Rome has made an unwarrantable addition—and locked up the Bible from general access, by imposing upon the whole church the Vulgate Latin Translation—ordering her worship to be performed in the same *generally unknown* tongue—obscurity of the scriptures complained of without any just cause. . . . . 421—439

LETTER XXXVIII.

Obedience due to the civil Magistrate—enforced by the clear and determinate authority of scripture—acknowledged in theory, even by the *covenanted* Assembly of Westminster—union betwixt Church and State—how abused by the Church of Rome—how it subsists in England—a conscientious submission to *constituted* authority, the duty of all christians—Conclusion. 440—453

A

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

OF

THE AUTHOR.

THE life and studies of a country clergyman, particularly in a retired situation, will seldom furnish materials for a publication suited to what is called the "literary taste" of the times. Yet it is not always among the great and wealthy, in the palace or populous city, that genius and merit are to be found. The most respectable characters are often discovered to be those, who least attract the notice of mankind; although to render the lives of such men interesting to a fastidious public, would require the extensive talents of a *Johnson*, or the minute fidelity of a *Boswell*. It is therefore with considerable diffidence that the writer of the present memoir is induced to lay before the public an account of the life, character, studies, correspondence, writings, and modes of thinking, of a man who spent a long and laborious life in the pastoral charge of a numerous congregation, in a remote pa-

rish of the north of Scotland, and who answered most literally to *Goldsmith's* description of the "Village Preacher:"

> "A man he was to all the country dear,
> "And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
> "Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
> "Nor e'er had chang'd,—nor wish'd to change, his place!"

The Reverend JOHN SKINNER, for nearly *sixty-five* years Minister of the Episcopal Congregation in Longside near Peterhead, was born at Balfour, in the parish of Birse, Aberdeenshire, on the 3d of October, 1721. His father, then schoolmaster of that parish, was of the same name, and had married Mrs Jean Gillanders, the widow of Donald Farquharson, Esq. of Balfour, Grandfather of Dr William Farquharson, the present President of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. About two years after the birth of their only son (the subject of this memoir) the mother died, when Mr Skinner removed to the parish of Echt, within twelve miles of Aberdeen, where he continued to discharge the duties of Schoolmaster for full fifty years, to the entire satisfaction of many persons of distinction, whose sons were entrusted to his care and tuition: And so great was his diligence in the line of his profession, that he fitted out more young men for the University, than most country schoolmasters of his day. After having been several years a widower, he married a second time, and had a numerous family, the youngest, and only surviving son of which marriage, James, is a writer of some standing in Edinburgh. The eldest son, John, studied under his father, and at a very early period displayed an uncommon genius,

par-

particularly for acquiring the knowledge of the Latin language. When only thirteen years of age, he appeared as a candidate at the annual competition in Marischal College, Aberdeen, and gained a considerable bursary, which greatly contributed towards defraying the expence of his attendance during the usual term of four sessions in that University. Having finished his academical courses, his first employment was as a teacher for a few months in the parish school of Kemnay, near Aberdeen. From thence he went to the adjoining parish of Monymusk, and acted as assistant to the Schoolmaster there; till Lady Grant having seen some of his poetical effusions in the Scottish dialect,* was pleased to encourage his rustic muse, by affording him in the house of Monymusk every accommodation for prosecuting his studies, and improving his mind in the attainment of useful learning. Here it was, that enjoying the conversation, and the benefit of reading under the direction, of a worthy episcopal clergyman in that neighbourhood, † he became a convert to the principles of episcopacy, and united himself to the venerable remains of the old established church of Scotland. This was the cause of no small disappointment to his father, who had naturally flattered himself, that a son of such promising talents would in time have made a figure in the presbyterian establishment. But

* Among others, what he called the "Monymusk Christmas Ba'ing," to be seen in the third volume; and a "Poem on a visit to *Paradise*," a beautiful spot of pleasure ground, which Sir Archibald Grant had laid out on the banks of the River Don; but of this no copy can be found.

† Mr Alexander Lunan, then at Blairdaff near Monymusk, afterwards at Inglismadie, Kincardineshire.

respecting, as a man of his good sense could not fail to respect, the conscientious, and disinterested motives, by which his young friend was actuated, the only sentiment, which remained for the father to cherish, was a fervent wish, that the son might show himself sincere in his now episcopal profession, and do credit to the principles which he had adopted. His attachment to these principles was soon after strengthened by a circumstance, which at once gave him an opportunity of making some farther enquiry into the truth of them, and by the consequences resulting from it, was the means of fixing his future destiny in life.

In the month of June, 1740, Mr Skinner received an invitation from the Reverend Robert Forbes in Leith, afterwards a Bishop of the Scotch episcopal church, to undertake the office of tutor to the only son of a gentleman of considerable property in Shetland. Having accepted the offer thus made to him in the most friendly manner, he continued in that situation for about a year, when, by the arrangements which took place in consequence of the death of his pupil's father,* his services being no longer necessary, he quitted, with the regret of all concerned, the station, which he had occupied to their entire satisfaction. The family, in which he had been employed, was of the episcopal communion, and of course was frequently visited by the only clergyman of that persuasion, in the Shetland Isles, the Rev. Mr Hunter,

* Mr Sinclair of Scalloway, on the subject of whose early and lamented death, Mr Skinner wrote a very affecting Elegy in English, and a Latin Inscription for his tombstone, both which were highly approved of by that learned grammarian Mr Thomas Ruddiman; from whose printing press ne copies of them were thrown off in a very handsome manner.

ter, whose unwearied assiduity in discharging the duties of his office, with great fatigue of body, and often at the imminent risk of his life in those boisterous seas, endeared him to the people under his pastoral charge, and made his memory precious among them, long after the hand of death had deprived them of that unremitting attention to all their wants, which never ceased but with his life. In the company and conversation of this truly pious, and faithful servant of Christ, Mr Skinner found such kind assistance in the prosecution of his studies, and such unaffected zeal for his happily accomplishing the object of them, as made him anxiously wish for a still nearer connection with one of so amiable a character, and from whom he had already experienced so much disinterested friendship, as seemed to flow from paternal affection. Nor did he in this form a vain expectation; for before he quitted the society of his venerable friend, and took his leave of Shetland, he had the happiness of receiving in marriage the hand of Mr Hunter's eldest daughter; and with her the best of all earthly blessings, a sweetly soothing affectionate wife, who was his dear companion, and ministered tenderly to all his wants, for the uncommon space of fifty-eight years.

Having returned to Aberdeenshire, and completed his preparatory studies, with a view to his entering into the service of the church, he received holy orders from the Right Rev. Bishop Dunbar, at Peterhead; and a vacancy happening in the episcopal congregation at Longside, by the removal to Dundee of its beloved pastor, Mr William Robertson, Mr Skinner was immediately settled as his successor, and entered on his new charge in November

vember, 1742, at the unanimous desire of a large and respectable congregation. Within a few years after his accepting this pastoral charge, the church to which he belonged, when beginning to emerge from her former state of suffering, was subjected to another deeply afflicting trial, occasioned by suspicions of the same political attachment, which had already exposed her to no small distress and danger.

The last, and most unfortunate attempt made by the exiled family of Stuart, for the recovery of what they had lost by the Revolution in 1688, having completely failed, without leaving the smallest hope of future success; those, who had embarked in the hazardous enterprize, had nothing to expect as individuals, but the ruinous consequences of legal prosecution; while the Scotch episcopal church was doomed to feel, as a community, not only the rigour of law, but some of the most cruel effects of military violence. Their chapels, or meeting-houses, were either burnt to the ground, or otherwise demolished by parties of armed men sent through the country for that purpose; and many of the clergy were obliged to leave their houses, under the terror of immediate imprisonment, if found at home; nay, to leave them to the mercy of plundering soldiers, out of the reach of discipline, or acting under the command of officers of the lowest rank, eager, by the strict execution of this barbarous service, to raise themselves in the esteem of some furious and enraged superior.

Such was the state of things through the north of Scotland in the summer of 1746, during which the episcopal clergy

clergy could hardly find a home, or place of safety; and poor Mr Skinner was for the most part a prisoner, either in custody or on his parole, uncertain how or when he might be called to undergo some heavier punishment. The writer of this memoir has often heard him tell, that on coming home one evening, from performing an occasional office in the way of his duty, he found his house in the possession of a military party; some of them guarding the door with fixed bayonets, and others searching the several apartments, even the bedchamber where Mrs Skinner was lying in of her fifth child, and little able to bear such a rude, unseasonable visit. No lenity was to be looked for from such unfeeling visitors, who pillaged the house of every thing they could carry with them, hardly leaving a change of linen to father, mother, or child in the family. The chapel with all its furniture was destroyed, and for several years the congregation could find no place to meet in for public worship but the clergyman's house, which not being sufficiently large, many of them were obliged to stand in the open air, during divine service. As this inconvenience, with other disheartening circumstances, was likely to operate on weak minds to the discouragement of episcopal principles, Mr Skinner was induced to write a small tract, which was printed in the year 1746, under the title of a "*Preservative against Presbytery*," chiefly designed for the instruction of the people under his immediate charge, and suited to the alarming apprehensions, which were then entertained, of the total extirpation of Scottish episcopacy, as far as human power could accomplish such an object.

The British Parliament, in the summer session of 1746,

1746, passed an Act, requiring all pastors, or ministers of Episcopal meetings in Scotland, besides other proofs of their loyalty, to register their Letters of Orders, and at the same time enacting, "that, from and after the "first of September that year, no Letters of Orders of "any Episcopal minister in Scotland shall be admitted "to be registered, but such as have been given by some "Bishop of the Church of England or of Ireland." An invitation was thus held out to the registering their Letters of Orders within a limited time. But, to prevent their deriving any benefit from a compliance with this invitation, a subsequent Act was passed in May 1748, declaring "that no Letters of Orders, not granted by "some Bishop of the Church of England or Ireland, "shall, from and after the 29th of September 1748, be "sufficient to qualify any pastor or minister of any "Episcopal meeting in Scotland, *whether the same* "*were registered before* or after the first of September "1746, and that every such registration, whether made "*before* or since, shall, from and after the said twenty-"ninth of September, be null and void." "Thus, in "1746 and 1748," says a writer in the Encyclopædia Britannica, "two laws were enacted against the Scotch "Episcopalians, which, under the pretence of eradicat-"ing their attachment to the house of Stuart, were so "contrived as to preclude such of their clergy as were "willing to pay allegiance to the reigning sovereign, "and to pray for the royal family by name, from reap-"ing the smallest benefit from their loyalty. The ex-"periment was tried by some of them *, of whom one venerable

* See a list of them in the Scots Magazine for 1746, page 446.

"venerable person, who was never suspected of undue "attachment to the house of Stuart, is still alive; but "he and his complying brethren had their chapels burnt, "and were themselves imprisoned, as if they had been "the most incorrigible Jacobites*." The "person" thus alluded to was Mr. Skinner at Longside, who, at the time when this article was written, had attained to a "venerable" old age, and who, notwithstanding his readiness to comply with the terms of the act of 1746, till that of 1748 rendered such compliance of no avail, was, several years after, very unexpectedly apprehended, and committed to prison, in consequence of a warrant from the Sheriff Substitute of Aberdeenshire†. Not willing to give the court any trouble in calling evidence to prove his having been guilty of the offence with which he was charged, he emitted, before the Sheriff, a voluntary confession, acknowledging, that in the discharge of his professional duty, he had been in the practice of officiating

* See Supplement to Encycl. Britan. vol. 1, p. 632, where the writer concludes his account of this matter with the following just and striking remarks;—"This was a kind of persecution, which, since the Reformation, "had had no precedent in the annals of Britain; a priest of the Church of "Rome, by renouncing the errors of Popery, has at all times been qualified to hold a living in England; a dissenting minister, of whatever denomination, might at any time be admitted into orders, and rise to the "highest dignities in the English Church; but while the laws of 1746 and "1748 remained in force, there was nothing in the power of a Scotch "Episcopal Clergyman to do, from which he could reap the smallest benefit;—by taking the oaths to government, he was not qualified to hold "a living in England, or even to enjoy a toleration in Scotland, and his "clerical character being acknowledged by the English Bishops, he could "not, by those prelates, be canonically re-ordained."

† See Scots Magazine for 1753, page 309.

ciating as a clergyman to more than four persons, besides his own family. In consequence of this confession, he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, which commenced on the 26th day of May 1753, and ended on the same day in November. When liberated in course of law, and anxious to resume the care of his destitute flock, he felt the ties of duty as their faithful pastor, greatly strengthened by gratitude for their attention during his absence, to his wife and helpless family, which then consisted of six young children, all, under God, depending on him for their support. During his residence in a common prison, and suffering all the hardships of close confinement, next to a humble trust in the divine goodness, his chief resource lay in the conversation of a few worthy friends, at the hours when they were allowed to visit him, and in the liberal supply of books which they had the means of procuring for him. These were his constant companions, when all others were excluded; and he has often been heard to say, that no six months of his life ever passed away with so little interruption to his studies, and his improvement, as the term of his legal imprisonment. The activity of his mind seemed to increase in proportion to his want of bodily exercise; and though he amused himself now and then with some lighter productions of a poetical turn, yet the general bent of his thoughts lay towards more grave and serious subjects. As an instance of this, it need only be mentioned, that it was in prison he first conceived the idea of committing to writing his thoughts on the nature of that peculiar symbol of the Divine presence, which is known to the biblical scholar under the Hebrew title of the Shechinah.

For

For some years before and after his imprisonment, he applied most of his leisure hours to the study of the Hebrew language, that wonderful language, which "is *in* "*itself* instructive, and the words of which give us light "into *things* in a manner different from those of any o- "ther language in the world." * In this fertile field, the first fruits of his labours, that were offered to the public, was "a Dissertation on Jacob's Prophecy," (Gen. xlix. 10.) printed at London in the year 1757, and "humbly offered as a supplement to the Bishop of Lon- "don's admirable Dissertation on the same text;" "The "sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver "from between his feet, till Shiloh come, and to him "shall the gathering of the people be." The common interpretation given of this passage does not come up to the patriarch's meaning, nor fix any certain determinate æra for the accomplishment of the prediction. The true sense of the text can be discovered only by looking into the Hebrew original, and examining every principal word contained in it, according to the use and application of it in other passages of the sacred records. Pursuing this method, as the best, if not the only way of finding out its true and proper meaning, the Author of the *Dissertation* now referred to, could discover no good

* So said one thoroughly acquainted with it. See an admirable "Letter on the Use of the Hebrew Language," which the writer thus introduces:—"You will want little persuasion to the study of the Hebrew "Language, when you know how valuable it is in itself, and what help "you will find from the use of it in your other studies; for it will be of "service to you as a critic, a mythologist, an antiquarian, a philosopher, "and a divine." See the works of the Rev. William Jones, M. A. F. R. S. volume xii. page 225, &c.

reason for assigning to the words of the prophecy the idea of power and authority, conveyed by the terms *sceptre* and *lawgiver*; and, if the sense was to be determined by history and matter of fact, he was able to shew that the temporal kingdom of Judah, which began only with David, ended with the Babylonish captivity; after which, though the royal line of David was still preserved, yet did his descendants never enjoy nor lay claim to any thing like temporal sovereignty. All that the inspired patriarch had in his view, and all that his sublime language announced, when explained by other passages of scripture, and properly understood, is plainly this, that "the *Tribeship* should not depart from Judah, nor a "*Typifier* from between his feet, or from among his "descendants, till Shiloh (the Messiah) should come, "and till the gathering of the peoples should be to him:" that is, in other words, Judah should not cease to be a tribe, his *rod*, or emblem of tribeship, should not be lost, neither should he want a *typifier*, or be deprived of the worship in God's holy place, with all its mystical rites, and figurative institutions, till the Messiah should come, and people of all kindreds, nations, and languages be gathered to him. Then indeed were Judah's privileges all to cease: scattered over the face of the earth, his descendants would no longer be able to shew themselves a distinct and separate tribe; their temple would be laid in the dust, with all the types and shadows which its services exhibited; for now Shiloh himself, the *typified One*, was come; the promise made to Judah, by the mouth of his father Jacob, was now literally and exactly fulfilled, and the God of Israel was no longer under obligation

bligation to take care of that *once elect*, but now *apostate race*. To deduce all this from the beautifully expressive language of scripture, was the design of Mr. Skinner's excellent *Dissertation on Jacob's prophecy;* a design highly approved by the learned Dr. Sherlock, then Bishop of London, and by other biblical critics of acknowledged eminence.

It was several years after the appearance of his "Dissertation on Jacob's Prophecy," before Mr Skinner had occasion to offer any farther specimen of his literary labours to the notice of the public. His mind however was still employed in some one branch or other of theological research. The reader of this account will readily excuse a short digression from its main design, to exhibit an instance of paternal solicitude, displaying at the same time a proof of Mr. Skinner's taste and skill in lyric composition, as well as the extent of his professional knowledge. His eldest son was bred in the seafaring line, and afterwards settled as a merchant in Philadelphia, where he suffered severely by the American rebellion; his second son, having in the year 1761, completed his studies at Marischal College, Aberdeen, was employed, for two years after, in the capacity of tutor to a Gentleman's son near Stirling,* where he received from his father, the following Sapphic Ode, written in December 1761, and conveying a most pleasing picture:—

AD FILIUM SUUM APUD BANNOCKBURN.

Quam sibi vellet tibi dat salutem
Corde devinctus Pater, ac amoris

Plenus

* Mr. Paterson, grandson to Sir Hugh Paterson of Bannockburn.

Plenus in qualem bona mî dederunt
Numina prolem.

Qualis in campis modo tranfretanis
Bruma sit; Tu nunc quid agis, studesve;
Musa perquirit, varios doceri
Anxia casus.

Heic furit nimbis pluviosus Auster
Sævus ut nunquam, in vetulas, ovesque,
Et simul nigris madefactus alas
Imbribus Eurus.

Me domi totis triduis reclusum
Inter ancillas querulum canoras
Languidus torpor premit, et pererrans
Lumina somnus.

Hinc sedet, ridetque operosa conjux,
Inde veloces digitis puellæ,
Me tenet mollis gravido stupentem
Corde cathedra.

Perlego interdum, simul ac redit mens,
Sive quæ risum moveant faceta,
Sive quæ sacri referant Poetæ
Carmina nomen.

Nunc et inviso pecudes equosque,
Nunc per agrestes vagor, et paludes,
Rite quæ debet populo ministrans
Jura sacerdos.

At tibi currunt hilares et albi
Temporis fluxus, tibi floret annus,
Te decet risus levis, et venusta
Fronte juventas.

Forte mireris lyrici moventem
Carminis plectro leviora Patrem,
Talibus forsan nimium jocantem
Cætera pigrum.

Pone me latos ubi tendit agros
Fertilis frugum Buchanæa tellus,

Pone

Pone me pulsant ubi nigra Thules
Littora fluctus.

Lætus et duro vacuus dolore
Tædium seræ peragam senectæ
Musa dum solvat tetricas jocoso
Carmine curas.

Knowing that his son was now devoting all the time, that could be spared from the duties of his office, to the prosecution of those studies which might fit him for the service of the Church, Mr. Skinner sent him the following directions on that subject, as extracted from a letter written in May 1762; "Your course of divinity read-
"ing, I presume, is under the Bishop's * management,
"and consequently is in good hands. You will find it
"very amusing, as well as edifying, to observe, as you
"go along, the various characters of the FATHERS, and
"the different constitutions of the times in which they
"lived. I do not pretend to a very extensive reading of
"the Fathers in their own writings, and yet I think I
"have a pretty clear notion of the several turns of ge-
"nius and disposition, by which they were distinguished.
"From this it is, that I am fondest of Chrysostom a-
"mong the Greeks, and of Ambrose among the Latins.
"I know that Augustine is generally reckoned the ora-
"cle;—but I think he rather wrote too much, and was
"too universally engaged in controversy. You will
"find this a pretty good method of acquiring a general
"notion of church history, to draw comparisons, and
"thereby learn to form characters of the several Fa-
"thers;

* The worthy and learned Bishop Alexander, then residing at Alloa, not far distant from Bannockburn.

" thers; by which you will be able to discover what they " advance, as narrators of facts, and what they say, as " following the bent of their own natural tempers and " turns of mind. Thus in Basil and Jerom, it is easy to " discover a sort of morose austerity, which leads them " to speak so much in favour of a recluse or monastic " life. In Gregory Nazianzen, a talent for poetic elo- " quence draws from him many rhetorical flourishes, " which have, in after times, been interpreted into doc- " trines. I need not be more particular. It is making " distinctions of this nature that will, in a great measure, " lighten and recommend the reading of Church History, " which otherwise is but a dry and burdensome study. " And be sure always carefully to keep an eye over the " Bishops of Rome, by which you will be able to mark " the various steps whereby, and the long course of " time wherein, their stupendous fabric of universal su- " premacy was reared to its greatest height."

These were excellent advices to a young examiner of the old ecclesiastical records; and a short extract from another letter will shew that the writer looked still farther back, and was in the habit of drawing conclusions equally sound and instructive, from records of a much older date. In February 1763, he writes to his son thus;—" You will wish to know, perhaps, how I have " been spending part of this dreary winter: why, I have " been reading *Rollin's Ancient History*, *Prideaux's* " *Connection*, *&c.* reading them for a second time; and " the more I renew my acquaintance with these old " heathen times, I am brought still more to value the " antiquity of the Old Testament Scripture History,

" which,

" which, through a succession of about three thousand " years, ends where the earliest of the heathens (Hero- " dotus) only begins. Thus I can easily discover *that* " wisdom (commonly called Philosophy), which, for so " many ages, was so little heard of among the unenlight- " ened nations, breaking out into a kind of dawn about " the time that Nebuchadnezzar's conquests had made " the world acquainted with the Hebrew sages. Till " then, paganism had heard of an Orpheus, of a Ho- " mer, of a Hesiod, and such like, who perhaps were " *philosophers*, and perhaps were little more than com- " mon *ballad singers*. But now, about the time of the " Jewish captivity, appeared Pythagoras, Thales, Solon, " Zoroaster, these heroes of heathen philosophy; whose " successors were Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, &c. Does " not this plainly shew, that their superior knowledge " came, somehow or other, from or by the Jews, as " theirs came from Moses, and his from God? If so, " where is the light of nature, that idol of the present " age? Where the ground for boasting so much of " heathen morality?"

Such were his reflections on the ancient state of the heathen nations, as exhibited in the only records which have been thought worthy of credit, and which, it must be acknowledged, bear ample testimony, not only to the truth, but also to the value and importance of the Mosaic History, and of the other inspired writings of the Old Testament. But while Mr Skinner was thus filling up the few vacant hours, which could be afforded from the duties of a laborious charge, in surveying the œconomy of divine grace, and the various circumstances of the

"ny well-meaning, though misinformed people. Those "pleas are founded on general principles, quite foreign "to the secret but attested circumstances of the sect in "particular, in favour of whom they have been urged; "and, hence, through unavoidable ignorance of facts, "have hitherto met with too great a share of attention, "in proportion to the too hastily approved merit and "justice of their application; of the fallaciousness of "which application every one could not form a true "judgment, by reason that the heterodox notions and ir-"regular practices, in respect both of politics and reli-"gion, peculiar to this party, and invalidating all their "claims, have not been so generally known and advert-"ed to as they ought to have been. This too general "and obvious a danger has induced me to set, in as just "a light as I could, those great lines of truth, political "and religious, to which the foundation-principles or "ground-work supporting the above mentioned pleas, "urged by the misinformed advocates for the anti-revo-"lutional party, run palpably contrary; as the most "effectual method I know to silence all clamours and "disputes upon this subject."

From such an introduction as is contained in these three curiously constructed sentences, the reader might easily infer what a labyrinth of confusion he would have to encounter, if he should summon up resolution enough to wade through three hundred pages of the same jumble of silly impertinent accusation, thrown into all the wild ridiculous shapes which a perverted fancy, aided by a malevolent disposition, was able to invent. When this farrago of absurdity and arrogance was announced as a work

work to be sold at the printers' shops in London and Edinburgh, though some were of opinion that it was unworthy of any thing like public notice, and ought to be allowed to sink privately into contempt, others argued from the common observation, that when a book of controversy is not answered, its friends and favourers are apt to indulge the flattering idea of its being unanswerable. Lest any such opinion should be formed of this strange production of the "*Minister to the authorised Episcopal congregation in Brechin*," there was published, soon after, "a Letter to Norman Sievewright, M. A. in vindi- "cation of the Episcopal Clergy of Scotland, from his "charge of Innovations in Politics and Religion." Of this letter, Mr. Skinner was known to be the Author, although, for obvious reasons, he did not think it prudent to give his name to a man, who had issued a general information against all the Nonjuring Episcopal Clergy in Scotland, as a warning to the public prosecutor to do his duty, and put a stop to what this zealous informer calls "the career of those pretended ministers, from "whose unwearied industry in keeping up a succession "in open defiance of law ecclesiastical as well as civil, "great hurt may possibly ensue some time or other to the "interests of the public, as well as of private misinformed "individuals."

It is now full forty years since this alarming prediction was published, and we may venture to assert that it would puzzle the prophet, were he yet alive, to point out any hurt, much more, any *great* hurt that has ensued to the interests either of the public, or of private individuals, from the continuance of that Episcopal succession which he,

he, good man! was so anxious to see extinguished. Yet this same sagacious *Seer* was enabled, as he says himself, "to clear up another difficulty," which, towards the conclusion of his work, he thus describes, with a penetration and precision, respecting the ways of Divine Providence, peculiar to himself;—"It was once thought a great "hardship," says this ingenious casuist, "that candi- "dates for holy orders in *Scotland* should be obliged, "before they can have a title to the privileges of law, to "procure ordination at the hands of either an *English* "or *Irish* Bishop. But the necessity of this measure "(prescribed in the 1746 and 1748 by the wisdom "of our Legislature, to prevent the most distant occa- "sion of keeping up a spirit of rebellion in the nation), "though at that time not generally known to men, yet "lay naked and open to the all-seeing eye of God, who "will not suffer imposture to pass undiscovered, and "who well knew that they, who at that time called "themselves *Bishops* in Scotland, and acted authorita- "tively as *such*, had corrupted the truth, both by their "unconstitutional politics, and their unscriptural inno- "vations in point of doctrine and worship, and had, "through their flagrant irregularities, forfeited all cano- "nical title to an episcopal character. For which rea- "sons the Divine Providence permitted a just and legal "prohibition to pass upon their irregular and uncanoni- "cal *orders*." Did ever the folly of man hazard a more presumptuous interpretation of the ways of God? Can human arrogance be more daringly displayed than in thus pretending, with such positive assurance, to assign the reasons on which are founded the proceedings and permis-

sions

sions of Divine Providence? What "lay naked and open "to the all-seeing eye of God," at the time when this bold appeal was made to his omniscience, must be equally open and obvious to it now, and yet the measure, which was then to prevent "imposture from passing undiscovered," has been since completely set aside "by the wisdom of our "Legislature," and those same "irregular and uncano- "nical orders," upon which, according to Mr. Sievewright, "Divine Providence permitted a *just and legal* "*prohibition* to pass in the years 1746 and 1748," received, by the same permission, in the year 1792, "a "*just and legal*" *toleration*, and have now *authority*, equal at least to that which, in the year 1767, constituted "the *authorized* Episcopal Congregation in Brechin." This would seem to indicate, that Providence had permitted our Legislature to see the needless severity and bad policy of the former prohibition, and therefore to exercise its wisdom in removing such an odious and unnecessary mark of distinction among British subjects.

From these few specimens of the matter and manner of Mr Sievewright's "*Preservative*," it may well be supposed that Mr Skinner would have little difficulty in framing his answer, and vindicating the Episcopal Clergy of Scotland from such a silly charge of "*innovations* in politics and religion;" a charge which carries its own refutation in the absurdity of its title, especially in the article of politics. For, as Mr Skinner justly observes, "The charge against us on that head used to be, that "we foolishly adhered to an old exploded system of po- "litical principles. *Old* notions, Sir, may be errors, "may be heresies, if you please, but they cannot, one "should

" should think, in propriety of language, be called *inno-*
" *vations*. Even as to *religion*, which, out of your deep
" regard to it, you always place behind *politics*, let the
" designation you take to yourself testify where the sus-
" picion of innovation will appear to lie : " *a Presbyter*,"
" (you call yourself) " *of the communion of the Church*
" *of England, as by law established, and Minister to the*
" *authorized Episcopal Congregation in Brechin*." This
" is pompous indeed, but is it not *new* ? When or where,
" in what records, in what part of the church, did you
" ever find any thing like it? You were born and or-
" dained, you reside and officiate within Britain; yet
" you do not tell us (it would seem you cannot tell us)
" what part of Britain, whether *England* or *Scotland*,
" you are a Presbyter of. Strangers indeed, (were any
" such to read your book) might, from your narration,
" imagine Brechin to be a part of the Church of England,
" but natives will not be so imposed on. However, it
" seems you have some connexion with Brechin. You
" are Minister to the authorized Episcopal Congregation
" there. What is an Episcopal Congregation, Sir? The
" *old* notion (whether right or wrong) was, a congre-
" gation under a Bishop. If so, tell us (pray do), what
" Bishop your Brechin congregation is under; and who
" *authorized* this Episcopal Congregation?"

It was in this sharp and pointed manner that Mr Skinner began his refutation of the charge of *novelty* in their religious principles, brought against the Scotch Episcopal Clergy; and when he came to that part of his adversary's book, which represents certain practices or opinions of these clergy, under the contemptuous title of *usages*, as

inno-

innovations also, the absurdity of giving them this appellation was sufficiently exposed by barely remarking, "that "these very usages, so bitterly railed against by a pres- "byter of the communion of the church of England, "were once the settled, uniform, authorised doctrine and "*practice* of the church of England herself, and that too "*after* her reformation from *popery*." * Affecting, therefore, to stigmatize them as *innovations*, could proceed only from that deep rooted prejudice, which could dictate the following threat against the obnoxious *usagers*, "that, though sentence against an evil work is not exe- "cuted in rigour at present, yet the time may possibly "be (if they do not timeously prevent it by returning to "their duty, as here plainly recommended to them) when "even a *Protestant Administration* may be provoked "to inflict just and legal punishment upon those, whom "*royal mercy* and *indulgence* cannot reclaim." To such an awful warning, the reply was shortly this. "We do "lie at *mercy* indeed; but it is (next to the mercy of "Him whose mercies are over all his works) at the mer- "cy of one who has, in many instances, already display- "ed gracious manifestations of an *indulgent* heart, and "whose wisdom will always direct him when to *punish*, "and when to *shew mercy*, without consulting you, or "such as you, upon the subject. And if the inscrutable "will of heaven should at any time permit *even a protes-*

* See this point fully established, and other important matters connected with it clearly illustrated, in a new edition of "The Office for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, according to the use of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, with a Preliminary Dissertation &c. by the Rev. John Skinner, A. M." grandson of the person whose life is here recorded.

"*tant administration* to lay the rod of affliction upon "us, which, we flatter ourselves, your uncharacteristic "insinuations will never influence them to do, we can "rest ourselves upon the old consolatory observation of "the royal psalmist, It is better to trust *in the Lord*, "than to put any confidence in *princes*." With such pious sentiments as these did Mr Skinner wind up his little work in vindication of the Scotch Episcopal Clergy, which, had it got justice in the printing and correction of the press, * would probably have found its way into better company, than what from its outward appearance seemed to be fit for it, and thus have met with the approbation which it deserved, from the soundness of its reasoning, the singular humour displayed in its composition, and the forcible, poignant manner, in which its arguments are applied to the purpose intended by them.

Soon after the appearance of Mr Sievewright's silly pamphlet, a publication was announced of a very different character, Dr Beattie's celebrated "Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism." This proved to be a work of great popularity, and had the highest encomiums bestowed on it by many eminent writers. Mr Skinner was a man who on such occasions always thought for himself, and never allowed his opinion to be swayed by the fashion of the day, or his sentiments to be shaken by the torrent of popular applause. He saw, or thought he saw, in some parts of this ingenious, and on the whole, justly admired Essay, such

* It was printed on a coarse paper, and in a very slovenly incorrect manner, by F. Douglas, then a Printer in Aberdeen."

such a weak, imperfect description of *Truth*, and such a precarious uncertain standard established for examining and judging of it, as the enemies of divine or revealed truth would gladly lay hold of, for covering their ignorance of it, and excusing their scepticism with regard to it. Impressed with these sentiments, he was at the pains to draw up two pretty long letters on the subject, addressed to a friend who wished to know his opinion of the manner, in which Dr Beattie had executed his very elaborate work on the "Nature and Immutability of Truth."

In the first of these letters, after making some apology for the boldness of his undertaking, the subject is thus introduced.—"I am indeed disappointed in not meeting with the satisfaction I was led to expect from the perusal of this much extolled "Essay on the Nature and Immu-"tability of Truth." For does not the very title promise us something like a clear definition of "what is truth?" Yet the first thing we meet with, after the general division of his subject, and a few remarks on the standard of truth, is an investigation "of the perception of truth in general," which terminates in establishing this as the grand object of his research, that "Common Sense is the Standard of Truth. But ought not the *nature* of a thing to be first described, in a philosophical discussion, before we proceed to consider our perception of it, or the standard by which we are to examine it?—The word TRUTH carries along with it an idea so sacred and solemn, as might well have merited a little more attention than barely telling us, that "truth is that, which the constitution of our nature determines us to believe, and falsehood is that, which the constitution of our nature deter-

mines us to disbelieve." Yet the Doctor soon after acknowledges, that "we often believe what we afterwards find to be false, but while belief continues, we think it true." Now I would ask, whether this be a description of truth? It may be what he calls it, "expressing his thoughts more shortly and more clearly," but I question much if it can be called instructing his readers, or clearing up to them the real nature of truth. If what I believe be truth only because, and as long as, I think it true; and, if it be supposable that my belief may alter, this makes truth to be liable to alteration, and not to be that "fixed, unchangeable, and eternal something," which he had told us before it seems to be thought by all mankind. I know he will not allow this consequence, but his way of accounting for truth seems to lead to it. And if this be all that he means by making *common sense the standard of truth*, I hardly think, that any person ever did, or ever will dispute with him about it. Nature determines us to believe a thing as *true*, and to disbelieve a thing as *false*. But it does not therefore follow that what we believe is *truth*, and what we disbelieve is *falsehood*. If truth have a real existence, it does not depend on the constitution of our nature, nor on our perception of it. An attachment to truth may be in our nature, but we may be mistaken in the object of that attachment. The *reality* subsists in, and of itself; and it is the constitution of our nature to seek after it, *if possibly we may find it*. Yet our author's laying it down as certain, that *common sense* is the standard of truth, and his argumentations, both in proof and in consequence of this proposition, will, I suspect, be considered by many, as tending to lessen the real intrinsic value of truth, by bringing it down to the level of

our

our variable, I may even say fallible, capacities. The common notion of a *standard*, is something to try some other thing by; and consequently as the *standard* must be more certain than the thing to be tried by it, the application of this to *truth* has rather an awkward appearance, and seems to raise or leave difficulties in the mind, which a philosopher should have endeavoured to guard against.

"Dr Beattie, I find, is at great pains to distinguish and ascertain the separate provinces of reason and common sense, and to shew how much the preference is due to the latter. "It were well," he says,* "for us, on many occasions, if we laid our systems aside, and were more attentive in observing these impulses of nature, in which reason has no part." And again he tells us, † "that all sound reasoning must ultimately rest on the principles of common sense, and consequently, that common sense is the ultimate judge of truth, to which reason must continually act in subordination;" for, as he afterwards adds, ‡ "when reason invades the rights of common sense, and presumes to arraign the authority by which she herself acts, nonsense and confusion must of necessity ensue—philosophy will grow contemptible, and its adherents—all the world will think them downright fools." This, you will own, is humbling reason with a witness, and I am far from being offended at it. I had long thought that reason took rather too much upon her, and pretended to a self-sufficiency to which she had no title. I had seen her meddling in, and assuming a dictatorial power, over matters which did not at all be-

* p. 48. † p. 51. ‡ p. 156.

belong to her cognizance; and I much wished that some able hand would bring her down, and teach her better manners. Yet I do not see why *common sense* should be thus set over her head, and clothed with the pompous privileges of judgment, and rights, and authority, and what not. This seems to be leaving us much where we were, and is only setting up one pretender in place of another. Could not a philosopher have discovered, or *invented* some other principle, or quality, or power, or faculty, to have been invested with this absolute sovereignty, or at least to have shared with common sense in the subjugation of refractory reason? Perhaps some such thing might be named, which by many would be thought to have as just a claim, and upon trial would be found to bid as fair for properly exercising this great office, as common sense can be proved, or has been found, to do. For, after all, what if it shall be said or thought that reason and common sense are but different names for the same thing, or at most but different modifications of the same power? No: our author assures us, that there is a difference between reason and common sense, and after mentioning four several senses put upon the word *reason*, and fixing on that which he finds most suitable to his own plan; he then describes common sense as "signifying that power of the mind, "which perceives truth, or commands belief, not by "progressive argumentation, but by an instantaneous, "instinctive, and irresistible impulse, derived neither "from education nor from habit, but from nature act-"ing independently on our will, whenever its object is "presented, according to an established law, and there-"fore properly called *sense*, and acting in a similar man-

"ner

" ner upon all, or at least upon a great majority of man-
" kind, and therefore properly called *common sense*."

" Now if this be *common sense*, and as such the *standard of truth*, felt only by a great *majority* of mankind, may we not ask, What is to be done with the *minority?* Have they no concern in truth, or are they to be allowed no feelings? If their feelings are only different from those of the majority, by what means is this difference to be determined, and the standard of truth to be adjusted? To apply this case to myself; If I have feelings, and am allowed to rest on these feelings as ultimate and decisive judges, or standards of truth, then, I must receive as truth whatever these feelings intimate to me as such. The next man will be in the same situation, and if his feelings shall differ from mine, as it is neither impossible nor improbable but they may, his notions of truth will be different from mine, and yet be as much truth to him, as mine are to me. If this be *sophistry*, it is *common sense* that leads to it; if it be *scepticism*, I fear it will be found that *common sense* countenances it; I mean *that common sense* which our author describes as "perceiving truth, or commanding belief, not by progressive argumentation, but by an instantaneous, instinctive, and irresistible impulse, derived neither from education, nor from habit, but from nature." Now if this impulse be irresistible, where is the free agency of man, or that which makes him an accountable being? Irresistibility, wherever lodged, destroys this freedom, and an impulse, clothed with such invincible power, is as much an enemy to it as fate or necessity, or any other supposed or supposeable thing whatever. The deriving this irresistible impulse

pulse from nature is another proposition which I cannot well digest, or know properly how to understand. Our Author indeed ascribes it to that "infallibility" which he thinks nature possesses; but for my own part, I cannot entertain such an high opinion of nature as this amounts to, and so far from thinking her infallible, I daily see much cause to suspect that she herself is miserably imposed on, and as unhappily imposes on her pupils. I know there are laws of nature, that is, in my sense of them, laws imposed upon nature, from which, of herself, she can never depart. But how to find out what these laws are, is the difficulty. Our Author has told us* that "of these laws he does not pretend to know any thing, except so far as they seem to be intimated to him by his own feelings; and by the suggestions of his own understanding." Yet whence that understanding arises, we are not informed; nothing is said of instruction or education, or of any dependance on external communication. All is the effect of his own internal powers, the entire production of his infallible nature. Formed as I am, with the same human nature, possessing whatever intrinsic powers belong to it, I am yet conscious, that I owe a great deal to education of some kind or other. And this acknowledgement I am not ashamed to make, in the midst of all the cry that has been raised about the prejudices of education. The Atheist considers the belief of a God as solely owing to the prejudice of education, and appeals to his own impartial reason and infallible nature, which tell him there is no such being. The Deist says the same of the belief of a revelation, and wonders

* Page 29.

wonders that men, under the direction of reason and nature, should see any necessity for it. All this serves only to shew that there may be bad education, which is indeed a melancholy truth, and has been long felt and lamented. But, with all this concession, it does not follow that education is unnecessary, or nature infallible. Were the case really so, what a pity, that so much time should be lost, and so much money thrown away in pursuit of this needless, this dangerous thing, Education! Is it not surprising, that in so wise a nation as this, and after so many repeated warnings, such a heavy loss has never yet been adverted to, and the free-born subjects of Britain delivered from the servile restraints of education, and left to the "instinctive impulses" of infallible nature?"

In his second letter on the "Essay on Truth," Mr. Skinner called his friend's attention to that part of the subject, which had struck very forcibly on his own mind, the wonderful veneration expressed for the characters and opinions of some of the ancient pagan philosophers, particularly those of Socrates and Aristotle. After adverting to Dr Beattie's fundamental position, that "all reasoning terminates in first principles," and asking a few simple questions respecting these principles, viz. "what they are, and how or whence they come? Are they self-evident, and all equally so, and in all mankind the same?" Mr Skinner thus proceeds:—

"The Doctor refers us to Aristotle for a confirmation of the certainty and universality of first principles. But what shall be said if Aristotle s authority shall not be admitted as decisive? For who, or what was Aristotle? a Pope or a Prophet? Did he invent these first principles,

or did he find them ready to his hand? I freely admit, that all reasoning must be founded upon, and carried on according to preliminaries and agreements of some sort or other. But the question still recurs, What is the original of these things? The Doctor calls them principles of common sense, intuitive axioms, truths which are clearly and certainly perceived by all men without proof; in a word, refers all to the power of the mind, the original feelings of the understanding, and consequently calls them first principles, as if they were first in the mind, and before any thing else. Indeed, if we could discover the first thought, or perception, or operation of the mind, such a thing might well be called a first principle. But this, I may confidently say, no man will pretend to discover. The first discovery we can make of any operation of the mind in others, or can remember of that nature in ourselves, is, I presume, long posterior to the first operation; so cannot properly be said to constitute a first principle. Nay, many, if not all of these propositions, which philosophers have dignified with the specious title of "first principles," seem, by the date of their appearance in the minds of most people, to be the work of time, and to have been brought into the mind by a slow and gradual progress. No doubt, some of them are sooner to be felt or met with than others, according to their importance, or other circumstances. But no judgment that we are able to form, either about the nature or operations of the mind, can warrant our ascribing these first principles to the mind itself, or to any power that the mind has to form them originally to, or in itself.

"I do not mean by this, to shake the foundation of science, or undermine the strength of first principles. It is the origin of them which I would wish to see rightly stated, and their meaning traced to its proper source. A first principle, as I understand it, is something handed down, received, and agreed in by common consent, to be the basis of, and introduction to, either sound reasoning, or friendly discourse, or philosophic discussion; and in that character it has no necessary claim to self-evidence in *thesi*, as the schools call it, but only in *hypothesi*, not in reality, but upon supposition. This notion of a first principle seems not very different from that which Dr Beattie quotes from Aristotle, "that except some first principles be taken for granted, there can be neither reason nor reasoning." His other great favourite Socrates would appear to have been of the same opinion. All his discourses are founded on concessions of this kind, still referring to some old acknowledged principles which had stood prior to him, not upon the footing of self-evidence, but on the ground of general consent, and supported, as it were, by something like traditionary revelation. Yet these old philosophers, as they are called, are held forth by some as the great enlighteners of mankind, and being the brightest ornaments of their own age, ought to be the admiration of ours. It is to these luminaries of the world that we are directed to look for instruction, especially to Socrates and Aristotle, who, from the exaggerated praise bestowed on them, would seem to have reached the utmost extent of human knowledge. What less can be said of the former, whom we find our Author not only extolling as the wisest, the steadiest, the most instructive, and the most consistent

of men in his life, but following him even to the grave with the same, if not a more extravagant flight of panegyric? "Few men," he says, "have shewn so firm an attachment to truth, as to lay down their life for its sake, yet this did Socrates." * But is it really so, that Socrates laid down his life for the sake of truth? His history is recorded by Plato, Xenophon, and others, but it nowhere expressly says so. The man was indeed unjustly and violently condemned, and so were many of the most shining characters whom the little factious republic of Athens produced. While his doctrine was new, his countrymen seem to have been charmed with him, and flocked to his lectures from all quarters. This appears to have been their national character, and they retained it a considerable time; for a philosopher, who had occasion to converse with them about four hundred years after Socrates, tells us "that the Athenians spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear some *new* thing." † Such, no doubt, was the cause of their first attachment to Socrates. But after he had been many years among them, and his manner of teaching was become familiar to them, the tide of popularity turned against him, and, from being the idol of the multitude, he became an object of scorn and contempt to the whole giddy populace of Athens. A comic writer of no mean figure found an interest in keeping him and his philosophy within bounds, and a provoked Orator invented a malicious calumny to destroy a poor harmless man. It was under the weight of these combined and cruel circumstances that Socrates fell; fell a prey to malice and phrenzy,

* Page 239. † Acts xvii. 21.

phrenzy, to the vile democratical spirit of the Athenians. It was the constitution of his country, and the humour of the people that cut him off, without regard to any connexion between his doctrine and what really deserves to be called "*Truth.*"

"Or if after all it shall still be said, that Socrates laid down his life for the "sake of truth," may we not ask, what was that truth for which Socrates died? Was he a martyr for endeavouring, as one, who really suffered for the truth, afterwards endeavoured, to "turn away the people of Athens from superstitious vanities, to serve the living God?" Yes, it will be said—Socrates saw through the folly of their ridiculous system of theology, and, from his zealous attempts to get it reformed, a part of the indictment against him was, "that he did not believe the Deities which the city believed, but introduced other new Gods." And does this prove that what he endeavoured to introduce was the belief of the true God, or that the cause which he had espoused was really the cause of truth? The fooleries indeed of the pagan rituals had been visible to many, as well as to Socrates, and various schemes of reformation had been tried. But comparisons are needless; let us hear his own account of the matter, as recorded by his two intimate friends, Plato, and Xenophon. They tell us, that when he was brought before the Judges, and had heard the accusation laid against him, charging him with what his enemies called irreligion, he immediately, and with a peculiar greatness of mind, stood upon his defence. And in what way? Did he boldly maintain the new doctrines which he was accused of disseminating, or endeavour to assert any thing like a reform-

reformation in theology? No: he directly, and in so many words, denies the charge. "I wonder," he says, "how Melitus came by this knowledge, that, as he "saith, I do not worship those Gods which the city "worships. Others have seen me, (and so might Me-"litus, if he had pleased) sacrifice at common festivals, "on the public altars. How do I introduce new Deities, "when I profess to be directed in all my actions by "the voice of God?" (meaning his dæmon), "doth not "the Priestess on the tripod convey to us by voice what "the God delivers to her?"

"After speaking thus, and adding more to the same purpose in his defence, when sentence was passed upon him, he turned to his friends, and said, that "they who "had suborned false witnesses against him, and they "who had borne such testimony, could not but be con-"scious to themselves of great impiety and injustice, "since they could not prove that he had named any new "Gods for Jupiter, Juno, and the rest, or sworn by "any such." While he was in prison he wrote a hymn in honour of *Apollo*; and after he had drunk the hemlock, he said to one of his friends, "O Crito, I owe "Æsculapius a cock, pay it, neglect it not," and so expired. Is there any thing here that looks like a condemnation of, or differing from, the religious customs of his country? Was this the truth for which he laid down his life? or is there the least intimation given of his expostulating with the people in his public defence, or instructing his friends in private conversation, to draw them off from the established superstitions? Why then should it be so positively affirmed, that he "laid down his

his life for the truth? The man himself claims no such honour. He died, indeed, by injustice, and by a lie. But surely dying by a lie, is not of itself, and without any farther consideration, dying *for* the truth. A villain, an impostor, an atheist, may have his life sworn away by subornation and perjury; but can such a one be said to die for truth? No: but Dr Beattie bids us read the defence made by Socrates before his judges, and then asks "if we see there any signs of doubt, hesitation, or fear, any suspicion of the possibility of his being in the wrong, any dissimulation, sophistry, or art, any thing but that noble assurance which so well becomes the cause of truth and virtue?" "All which," he says, "is convincing evidence that Socrates felt, believed, "and avowed the truth." But could any one say, that every thing which Socrates believed, and avowed, was truth? Was his hymn to Apollo, and his cock to Æsculapius, the truth? Did he really believe, and sincerely worship these deities, or was he, like some other philosophers, only a well bred conformist to the times? This, Dr Beattie would not allow to be said; and yet, what he has said appears no less strange, from the mouth of a professed Christian, "that few men have done what So-"crates did, in laying down his life for the truth." The phrase "few men" is indeed indefinite, and may be designed to admit any convenient explication; but it has a diminutive sound, and in a comparison of such moment might have been spared. The Doctor must have read of thousands and ten thousands, who had done as much as Socrates did, had with as much "steadiness" shewn an uniform attachment to truth, and at last laid down their lives for its sake. Surely he could not have forgotten the noble army

of

of martyrs, which Christianity has long boasted of: Neither could he call them *few*, nor consistently doubt that what they suffered for was truth. Perhaps it will be said, that he had not these latter times in his eye, and only referred to what had been before, or contemporary with Socrates. Yet the terms, in which he has expressed himself, will hardly bear this restriction; and even if they could, it would be difficult to justify their intended application, since it is well known what a "cloud of witnesses," or martyrs for the truth, had appeared before Socrates, bearing punishments as unjust, and as severe as his cup of hemlock. We have heard of "fiery furnaces," and "lions' dens," and the like. These, and many such instances, prior to the famous æra of Socratic renown, might have met with some notice, and prevented the vilifying expression of *few men* having suffered as Socrates did.

"But if the Doctor's zeal for Socrates has produced a strain of panegyric far beyond what a strict regard to truth will be found to warrrant; the manner, in which he speaks of Aristotle, discovers, if possible, a still higher flight of pompous admiration. Aristotle is called "the great Philosopher, the great Ancient, who is most admired by those who best understand him." We are told that "Aristotle's constant aim was to discover truth and establish conviction;" and assured, on the testimony of Fielding, "that no author ever understood human nature better than Aristotle." I am almost tempted to think, that the substance of the whole *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth* is extracted from Aristotle's philosophy, and that its solidity rests entirely upon his scheme of intuitive axioms, and self-evident principles.

ciples. I do not mean, however, to enter into the merits of this weighty cause. I ingenuously confess my incapacity; and, if I shall be despised for not admiring Aristotle, I shall allow it to be for the reason assigned in the work before me, because I do not understand him. I have studied his history, and looked into some of his works, but cannot see the peculiar tendency of them to ascertain the standard of truth. It has indeed been objected against them, that most of those errors, which are really the "absurdities of popery," have been drawn from or supported by the subtleties of Aristotle's philosophy. This is evident from the history of those middle centuries of christianity, which are commonly called the *dark ages*, and which must have been dark indeed, if they enjoyed no light but that of Aristotle's philosophy. Even Dr Beattie himself acknowledges, that "Aristotle was not exempted from that fallibility which is incident to human nature." Yet he immediately adds, "it would not be amiss if our modern wits would study him a little, before they venture to decide so positively on his abilities and character." And is his character so sacred, that it must not be suspected? his abilities so mighty, that they must not be questioned? So it would appear, from our Author's "allowing our modern Sceptics to avail themselves, all they can, of the authority" of certain writers, whom he strangely classes together as worthy of nothing but contempt, and then adding, "but let them not presume to sanctify their trash with the venerable names of Socrates and Aristotle." If our "modern Sceptics" can be hardy enough to despise names, whose productions are truly *sanctified*, and generally called the *Holy Scriptures*, they may well be supposed capable of inquiring

what it is that can justify the paying such high veneration to the names of Socrates and Aristotle? Indeed I, who am not a sceptic, cannot help asking, whence comes this spirit of heathen attachment, this wonderful and unaccountable fondness for those, whom the Doctor points out with so much peculiar distinction, as the "Ancients," and recommends their writings so warmly to the study of modern philosophers? What were these "Ancients?" Whence had they their knowledge, and whom did they study? If mankind, with all their "powers, and feelings, and instincts," must still have instructors, why are we always sent to these Ancients for instruction, and yet not told what it is, in which they are to instruct us, or what gives them a right to be invested with that office? Their admirers will no doubt pretend, that Truth was the great object of their studies, and that which we ought to learn from them. If by Truth, then, we mean the philosophy of nature, and of the origin of things, where is he among these extolled ancients, that can give us any clear insight into these matters? Which of all their jarring and irreconcileable systems are we to look to for truth or certainty; especially when our Author acknowledges, that even the great Aristotle himself "was guilty of some speculative errors in Natural Philosophy?" If so, this at least is one part of study connected with the discovery of Truth, in which, it must be owned, the ancients can give us very little assistance. But if by Truth we are to understand what is called *moral Truth*, in the knowledge of which, while some tell us that the ancients shone with admirable lustre, others complain of the lameness and insufficiency of all their information; yet in a matter of so much importance as must be attached

tached to morality, we would wish to have more able and steady directors.

"The many doubtful, and different opinions, which prevailed among the ancients respecting the origin of evil, and what they called the "summum bonum," or chief good of man, cannot but be sadly perplexing to the serious enquirer after truth, and seem to have forced from our Essayist an acknowledgement, that something more "has been vouchsafed to man for the regulation of his "moral conduct." If that be the case, the authority of the ancients is at once superseded, and we are taught to expect direction from another quarter: which, if it be true in regard to moral truth, is still more undeniably evident as to that truth which is called *Theological*, and which respects the being and nature of the Deity. On this head, what strange fancies, what confused notions do we find among the Pagan poets, and these too, quoted, and commented upon, with great gravity, and of set purpose, by the philosophers?

"It is pretended, however, that their theology was more pure and sublime than what we meet with in the poetical fables, and ought not to be measured, or any judgment formed of it, by these absurd fictions. Yet Dr Beattie owns,* that "in the writings of the most popular poets "we have a chance to find the opinions of ancient times "more genuine than in systems of philosophy; because," he says, "to advance paradoxes, and consequently to "disguise facts, is often the most effectual recommenda-"tion of a philosopher, but a poet must conform himself "to the general principles and manners of mankind."

* Page 334.

If it be really so, let the admirers of the ancients honestly tell us what lessons in theology are to be learned in their school, and what we are to think, not only of Socrates and Aristotle, but of Homer, Ovid, and Virgil, for Doctors of Divinity? I shall be told, perhaps, that it is not the *matter* of their discoveries, but only the *manner* of their enquiry, their method of investigation, and the principles they have laid down, which are proposed as a model worthy of imitation, and a fit pattern for us to copy after. But still I must be allowed to ask, whether this method, and these principles, did actually answer the purpose of leading them to the discovery of truth, or whether it was really truth, which they were thus successful in discovering? It is strange that we cannot be favoured with a direct answer to this plain, simple question, but are still put off with artful evasions, and high encomiums on the knowledge and wisdom of the ancients, without ever being informed what end this wisdom and knowledge served to themselves, or can serve to us.

" I shall acknowledge that the examples of some of these ancients are a reproach, and will be a part of condemnation to many who have been blessed with clearer light. and yet have not walked worthy of that light. But this will not prove that they are to be our patterns, or their principles to be our guides. As to the two " ancients" in particular, who are mentioned by our author in terms of such high veneration, I would be glad to know what there is so " venerable" in the names of Socrates and Aristotle, that entitles them to so peculiar a mark of distinction. Were they Aborigines, the first of mankind, or even the first of philosophers? Was *truth* unknown to the world, till they appeared?—

Whence

Whence had they their wonderful wisdom (as was once asked on another occasion) "from heaven, or of men?" Surely there were sages and instructors long before their days, as long before them, as they are before us. If the study of the ancients be the school of wisdom, why not go as far back as antiquity can carry us, or as far as antiquity furnishes records for our direction? This would be really and truly to study the ancients, and would bid as fair for fixing the "standard of truth," as the inventions of later ages. We should thus indeed be taken out of the schools of Socrates and Aristotle, but committed to the guidance of names fully as *venerable*; for we should be set to the more edifying task of "searching the scriptures," and studying the writings of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, explained and applied as they have so happily been by CHRIST, and his *Apostles*.*"

Various reasons prevented the publication of the two letters, which have been thus abridged, at the time when they were written; but it may be agreeable to some, and useful to others, among the readers of this memoir, to observe Mr Skinner's sentiments, and his manner of expressing them, on a subject, which he considered as of the most essential consequence to the credit and character of

* As it was often observed by Mr Skinner,

Non joca delectant semper, non seria semper,
Semper delectant *Seria* mixta *jocis*.

So, agreeably to this maxim, when he had finished his two *serious* letters on Dr Beattie's "Standard of Truth," he employed his muse in a *jocular* strain, and amused himself with composing that humourous Latin piece which he called "Ode Horatiana, Metro Tullochgormiano," every stanza ending with "Doctissime Doctorum," and which the reader will find in Volume III.

of the Christian Revelation, "the TRUTH as it is in JESUS."

The next literary production that excited his attention, and employed his pen, was a work far inferior in reputation to the "Essay on Truth," but aiming at a still higher mark in the way of popular applause, by attacking a body of men, whose powers have afforded no small scope for raillery and ridicule among those who are disposed to laugh at what they do not understand, and to rail at what they do not like. The performance now alluded to, under the title of an "Enquiry into the powers of Ecclesiastics, on the principles of Scripture and reason," was the work of the Rev. Thomas Gordon, at Speymouth, who, though a minister of the *Presbyterian* establishment, thought it the most effectual service he could do to the interests of religion "and society," to undermine the foundation of that establishment, by denying the "power" of *Presbyters*, as his brethren had denied the "power" of *Bishops*, in the government of the Christian church. A blow thus levelled against all rule, authority, and order, in that blessed society, Mr Skinner thought it his duty to parry, by every means in his power; and, as on his remarks on Dr Beattie's "Standard of Truth," he had to contend against a warm and zealous partizan on the side of the heathen ancients, so in his answer to Mr Gordon's laboured "Enquiry" he had to encounter a violent opposer of all that respect and veneration, which have been so generally entertained for pure Christian antiquity. Anxious to maintain this singular opposition, the "Enquirer" makes it a subject of heavy complaint, that in support of many tenets, opinions,

and

and usages, even protestants "derive their weight, not "from the Scriptures, not from the reason of the human "mind, but from a very different source, from *anti-* "*quity*, that is, from the practice of what they are "pleased to call the primitive church, from the writ- "ings of some venerable father, or from the decision "of some national or general council, in short, from "some quarter or other, which, in the last resort, may "be properly resolved into human authority."

This unseemly attack on the primitive Church, strengthened by some odious invectives against *priests* and *priestcraft*, was the first thing that attracted Mr. Skinner's attention, and produced the following defence of 'an old friend of the christian world.'—"In the first "place," says he, "*honest antiquity* is not here fairly "dealt with; it is not the writings of some one Father "that constitutes what protestants call antiquity; but the "concurring writings of all the Fathers, the *consentiens* "*judicium ecclesiæ catholicæ*, the *quod semper*, *quod ubi-* "*que*, *quod ab omnibus*, the *joint testimony* of these early "times, when that is to be met with, as in most points "which you oppose, it is. Besides, it is to be remember- "ed, that most protestants limit what they principally mean "by the Primitive Church, to a time when there were "few national councils, and not one general council "held, unless the fifteenth chapter of the Acts present "an exception.

"But secondly, why do you call antiquity a very "different source from scripture and reason? Had not "these Venerables scripture and reason as well as you, "or were they all atheists and idiots? You say (page 9) "the

" the public are candid, and it is well for antiquity that " they are so.

" In the third place, what do you mean by resolving " antiquity, as different from reason, into human autho- " rity? Is the reason of the human mind a divine au- " thority? If you could prove that point, I should be " sorry for disclaiming it. But *that* I am satisfied you " never can, so I shall rest myself easy. Indeed, from " your way of treating the primitive Church, upon all " occasions, it is evident what fears you have about it, " and how much you suspect an opposition from that " quarter."

But another object of Mr Gordon's apprehension, as something that was likely to prove hostile to his plan, he spends a whole chapter in discussing, and entitles it " On Tradition;" a subject which he makes, as he had made the primitive Church before, the constant butt of his ridicule. But, as Mr Skinner justly observed, " ri- " diculing a witness is not confuting his testimony. It " may display wit, or gratify ill-nature, but with un- " prejudiced spectators, it takes nothing from the force " of the declaration." But if Mr. Gordon asked, " Are we then to believe all and every thing that the " Fathers have said, when the mystery of iniquity be- " gan so early to work?" To this his answerer re- plied, " I ask in return, is a *priesthood* in general part " of the mystery of iniquity? The Fathers say and write, " that in, and immediately after the Apostolic age, there " was *an order of priesthood*, such an order as you are " fighting against, and this they say unanimously, not one " venerable Father only, but every Father whom we " have

"have heard of, venerable or not, all agree in this, and "not so much as one dissentient voice can be found "among them. This therefore is the tradition you "should have raised your principal battery against, and "not jumbled it into the confused heap of dissimilar "nonsense, thereby to load it, *in cumulo*, with the con- "tempt commonly cast upon all such. But you "have thought, that many of your readers would not, "or could not see through the artifice, and would rea- "dily swallow the plausible bait of 'making the law of "God void by men's traditions.' How honest such a "method is, I submit to that candour by which you wish "to be judged."

After inquiring into what he called the "Rights of Conscience and private Judgment," and advancing many strange, incoherent notions on this subject, Mr Gordon proceeded to his chapters "Of the Church,—Of Apostolic Succession,—Of Ordination,—and Of Sacraments;" in which last we find a wipe "at the whole body of *nonjurors* and *highflyers* of every denomination, as maintaining the necessity of *priestly* ordination to give validity to these institutions;" as if this necessity was any way hurt or set aside by giving *nicknames* to the maintainers of it. It was not indeed the nature of these institutions, or the virtue supposed to be in them, that was so much the object of Mr Gordon's dislike, as the claim of an exclusive right to dispense them. To combat this claim, was the avowed design of his whole "Inquiry into the Powers of Ecclesiastics," and therefore, after treating of "the Consecration of the Elements" in the Lord's Supper, an expression which must have been very offen-

sive to one, whose favourite maxim appears to have been, that no one thing is more sacred than another; he then started what he called "a question of the greatest importance," viz. "the Right to dispense the positive Institutions of Christianity," and a very important question it surely is. Yet one would not think so, from the manner in which he affects to decide it, by affirming that "no order of priests have an exclusive right of admi-"nistration, but that these institutions, that is, the ad-"ministration of them, is a part of the common privi-"leges of christianity." This he attempts to shew, by producing some instances from scripture, which he explains in his own way, and twists to the purpose for which he had brought them forward; drawing this conclusion from the whole of his reasoning on the subject:—"To suppose a thing necessary to my happiness, which "is not in my own power, or wholly depends on the "good pleasure of another, over whom I have no au-"thority, and concerning whose intentions or disposi-"tions, I can have no security, is to suppose a constitution "the most foolish and ill-natured, utterly inconsistent "with our ideas of a wise and good agent."

To such an arrogant objection, rendered still more presumptuous by the sophistical way of stating it, Mr. Skinner thought it enough to mention two plain and positive institutions of divine appointment, absolutely necessary, while they remained in force, to the safety and happiness of God's people, yet "wholly depending on the good pleasure," that is, on the care and attention of others; and then added another case, applicable to our own times, which he thus stated:—"Nay further, by "your

" your own concession, our happiness depends upon be-
" lieving. Is believing absolutely and originally in our
" own power? What says the Apostle? 'How shall
" they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and
" how shall they hear without a preacher?' Believing in
" Christ, you see, is connected with, and depends upon
" preaching, and preaching is not in our own power.
" Preachers may refuse, as well as priests; and your
" own *teachers* may be negligent and erroneous. Is it
" 'consistent with our ideas of a wise and good agent'
" to suppose our happiness 'restricted,' as you say, 'to
" their instrumentality, or immediate offices?' Yet you
" have thought proper to add, 'Where our gracious
" Lord hath made no limitation; where he hath left the
" blessings of the Gospel free from every restraint, it is
" the highest presumption and impiety in poor mortals
" to pretend to assume peculiar privileges, and to narrow
" the path.' You still take the main point for granted,
" and then flourish away upon that assumption as you
" please. Whereas, modesty, and the common forms
" of controversy might have taught you to have put
" your consequential charge in the hypothetic style.
" And in that style, it can be, much in your own lan-
" guage, retorted back upon you thus,—If our gracious
" Lord hath made any limitation; if he hath left the
" blessings of the Gospel under the restraint of positive
" institution, it is the highest presumption and impiety
" in arrogant teachers, to break through these restraints,
" and to pretend to *widen* the path. The wide path,
" you know, is, at least, as dangerous, and much more
" alluring than the narrow one; and I leave you to take
" your choice."

The only remaining parts of Mr Gordon's "Inquiry" were the chapters in which he treated "of Church Discipline and Absolution," on which he scarcely said any thing worthy of animadversion; and last of all, "Of Christian Teachers." This indeed seems to have been the grand design of his whole "Inquiry;" on which, among many others, Mr Skinner made the following just and pertinent remarks:—"After what has been already "said in answer to it, I think it necessary only to ob- "serve upon this head, that there is no benefit redound- "ing to society from your *teachers*, but what may be "had by *priests*; no danger impending from *priests*, "but what there is risk of from *teachers*. Your fine "piece of oratory (p. 256) upon the religion of nature, "and the ministers of it, I do not meddle with, as it "is but an idle volunteering at best, and no way connect- "ed with your proposed subject. Who these ministers of "natural religion were, or when, and where they lived, "you have not told us;—Ecclesiastics they could not "be, because natural religion required none; and there- "fore you had no business with them. Allowing them "to have been *teachers*, and their writings to have been, "as you say, of great service in preserving 'a sense of "duty and morals,' it was incumbent upon you to have "proved, that they were chosen and set apart by the "community for that purpose. Something like this "might have brought them within your plan; though "still there would have been a material defect in the "men whom I suppose you have in your eye, unless "you could have said, that they preached *Christ crucified*. All your mighty encomiums, therefore, on the "office of public teaching, I readily admit: and yet I "can

"can see no reason, from all you have said in praise of "it, but what it may be as effectually and advanta- "geously performed by pretenders to, or possessors of "*Apostolic Succession*, as by your idols of *common con-* "*sent:* I might have said *more advantageously*, as the "teaching of the former is thought to be attended with "sacramental privileges, which you have, in name of "the latter, absolutely discarded. Had your attempt "been to vindicate the purity of the christian faith, or "to settle the practice of virtue upon a christian foun- "dation, the piety of the design might have atoned for "any particularity of sentiment, or uncommonness of "expression. But thus, without cause, to inflame the "passions of mankind, already running mad upon civil "and religious liberty, and that at the expence of the most "sacred and solemn things of religion, added to the "most abusive and contemptuous language that could "possibly be imagined, against all that differ from you, "and some of whom never molested you,* is a piece "of rashness that no sober person can well justify, and "which can be attributed to nothing but a bewitching "spirit of singularity, and the expectation with which "you have probably flattered yourself, as times go, of "popular approbation."

It has been thought proper to give this pretty full account of the Answer to Mr Gordon's "Inquiry," written in Mr Skinner's usual lively and animated manner, because, having been published above thirty years ago, when a considerable impression was sold, it may now be considered

* This probably alludes to his malevolent sneer at the *Nonjurors* and *Highflyers.*

considered as out of print, a few copies only having been found in the Author's possession at his death.

The period was now approaching, when Mr Skinner began to prepare materials for an undertaking, which had been strongly recommended as worthy of his serious consideration. Most people feel a desire to enquire into the history of ancient times. When we hear of ancestors, curiosity prompts us to examine into what they did, and to discover, if we can, how they thought on subjects, which were then held, as we now hold them to be, of the highest importance. We wish to know, whether, on these subjects, we agree in opinion with those that have gone before us, or if we differ, wherein that difference lies, and what have been the consequences of it. These are points which the inquisitive mind will be anxious to see fully investigated, and it is the business of the historian to proceed to such investigation with a strict regard to truth, and an honest desire to avoid mistakes as much as possible. This will be found the more difficult in narrating those facts which hang upon very scanty and imperfect records; especially when these records may not be entirely free from the suspicion of having been mutilated in the hands of unfaithful transcribers.

To the records of the Scottish nation, there are two æras which are generally allowed to have been very destructive, first the competition between Bruce and Baliol, and secondly the Reformation of Religion. It was during the former period, that Edward the first of England, with all the pride and haughtiness of a provoked, because disap-

disappointed, conqueror, wreaked his revenge on the archives, records, and public monuments of the kingdom, wantonly destroying what he could not conveniently carry away. And at the Reformation, it is equally to be lamented, that the Popish clergy found means to deprive the nation of many valuable records, which might have been highly useful to the candid historian in these less violent days. Under such difficult circumstances it was no easy matter to produce any thing like a regular Ecclesiastical History of Scotland; and the first indication of such a thing being undertaken by Mr Skinner, appears in a letter from his son at Aberdeen, dated the 7th of February, 1782, wherein he writes as follows:

'Having little to say for some weeks past, and not 'much spare time, I deferred writing, till I should gather 'a few materials, to make the work the easier. And 'now your historical proposal being uppermost in my 'mind, I must begin with it, and both enquire if you 'have as yet set seriously to the work, and solicit your 'entering upon it as soon as possible, if you have hither-'to been prevented either by outward avocations, or an 'inward reluctance to an undertaking of such magni-'tude, and which, in some periods of our history, must 'be attended with considerable difficulty. As to the 'manner of your executing the plan proposed, I think 'the doing it in an epistolary way will be the most 'eligible of any, both on account of its being your usual 'way of writing, and because it will admit of appropri-'ate reflections and applications at the close of each 'letter, pointing always to the uniform object of the 'work, and conveying the designed instruction in the

'most

'most easy and familiar manner. And for your encou-
'ragement, thus to depart from the ordinary continued
'tract of historical narrative, I find a precedent afforded
'in some of the Reviews for last year, in which notice
'is taken of, and great approbation bestowed upon, a
'History of the Revolution, in a series of Letters, by a
'female writer; who, the Reviewers observe, "has
"struck out this new mode of conveying historical
"instruction to great advantage." You speak of being
'desirous to leave behind you some testimony of your
'regard for that variously depressed, but still vene-
'rable church, in which you have so long and hap-
'pily served. And what can be a more suitable and
'becoming token of your regard, than a fair and candid
'representation of all the vicissitudes of fortune which
'she has undergone, and the corruptions which she has
'wrestled through, till returning to that state of primi-
'tive purity in which she first appeared, as a part of
'the body of Christ, she has now but "a *few names*
"whose garments are undefiled," and their religion
"*unspotted* from the world?"

A subsequent letter from the author on the subject of his Ecclesiastical History, expresses his satisfaction in finding that his epistolary form was approved of; as, says he, 'for that form I have a natural fondness, both
'because of the familiarity and modesty of it, sensible
'that my style and manner of writing requires some
'cover or apology of this kind. As to its abounding
'in what are now called *Scotticisms*, a blemish which
'by English reviewers every Scotch writer is more or
'less

'less charged with, I own myself to be one of those 'who do not consider this supposed blemish to be any 'real deformity, and therefore am not ashamed of it.'

Another friend having suggested to him the propriety of bringing his narrative no farther down than to the period of the Revolution in 1688, and having at the same time hinted the necessity of his bestowing great care and attention on the style and composition of his work, so as to suit it as much as possible to the fashion or taste of the age, his reply was in these terms: 'As to my *His-* 'tory, of which, you say, there are high hopes, (and 'if so, I am afraid too high to be gratified) I shall 'have it finished now in a few days, perhaps before this 'reach you, and have already brought it down to the 'present reign. I perceive the propriety of what you hint 'about the times since the Revolution, and hope, I have, 'by anticipation, removed your fears, by endeavouring 'to walk through that thorny field, with all due caution, 'so as neither to desert the cause which I would wish 'to serve, nor hurt those whom you would wish not to 'offend. This was the chief part of the plan, which I 'was solicited to adopt, and all the previous steps were 'intended only to serve as an introduction to this; so I 'could not possibly omit such a principal branch of the 'undertaking, if I was to undertake the work at all. 'How I have been able to execute it, or what reception 'it may meet with, when it appears before the public, is 'not for me to say. I acknowledge the friendly inten- 'tion of what you say about the style and manner of my 'writing. The same advice has come to me from more 'quarters than one, and I am abundantly sensible of my

'own defects in that way. But when it is remembered 'that I write solely for the instruction or information of 'the common class of readers, and of such of my younger 'brethren in the church as have pressed the undertak-'ing upon me, I flatter myself that men of taste, and 'approved critics, if any such condescend to look into it, 'will view the work with an eye of candour, and if 'they find nothing faulty in the *matter*, will be good 'enough to make allowance for any defect or inaccuracy 'in the *manner* of it.'

Under the impression of these modest sentiments, Mr Skinner committed his work to the press, and in the year 1788 it was published in two volumes octavo, and entitled "An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland, from the first appearance of Christianity in that kingdom, to the present time, in a series of letters to a friend." A Dedication in Latin verse, inscribed to his son, and his Bishop, is prefixed to the work, and expresses the same diffidence in his own abilities which had appeared in the letter just now quoted, accompanied with the same anxious desire to be useful to the Church which had animated all his labours in her service. * The opinion given of this work, by such of the Reviewers of that period as chose to take notice of it, is a matter of no great consequence, as *reviewing*, in most hands, seems to be managed, like other "trades by which men have their living," more with a view to the profit of those concerned in it, than from

* Of this Dedication an English Gentleman of great worth and learning has been heard to say, that frequently as he has read it, the perusal never fails to fill his eye with a sympathetic tear, shewing how he feels for the circumstances of the author, and is warmed with that glow of pa-

from any desire to promote the interests of truth, and give a right direction to the sentiments and conduct of the age. Were we to seek a character of the "Ecclesiastical History of Scotland," given without prejudice, and from no other motive than an honest intention to do justice to the writer, we might find it in two lines of the life of

ternal affection which adorns this beautiful little poem. The following is a copy of it:—

AD FILIUM EPISCOPUM,

QUEM ADJUVET 'O ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥΣ

AUCTORIS DEDICATIO.

Accipe, chare mihi duplice nunc nomine amoris,
Et *Pater* officio, et sanguine *Nate* mihi,
Accipe, sed facilis, quatuor collecta per annos
Quæ quondam licuit scripta, vocasse patris;
Parva quidem, sed non parvo congesta labore,
Atque utinam multo digna labore putes.
Non ego tanto operi satis apta juvamina jacto
Qualia Doctorum commoda vulgus habet;
Non mihi facundæ vires, nec copia linguæ
Nec thecas onerat lectio larga meas.
Rusticus, et pauper, libris peregrinus et aulis,
Vix mihi quæ placeant, scribere digna queo;
At non spernendum forsan, nec inutile prorsus
Hoc rudibus, quale est, invenietur opus.
Forte bonorum inter selecta volumina fratrum
Implebit vacuum pagina nostra locum.
Nec deerit, spero, qui mei memor, unus et alter
Colliget ex istis paucula mella favis.
Non famam Historici celebris, nec præmia capto
Non honor ingenio convenit ille meo.
Forte et epistolicum merito metuenda lacessent
Verbere non parco critica flagra modum:
At nostri moris modus hic, quo sæpius olim
Monstravit calamum charta pusilla meum.
Quod potui, feci; nec sum qui talia docti
Sperarem laudes promeritura chori,

Dr Horne by his eminently learned biographer, the Rev. William Jones, who, having mentioned some circumstances respecting the situation of the Scotch Episcopal Church, adds the following remark;—'If the reader 'should wish to know more of the people of this com-'munion, let him consult an Ecclesiastical History of 'the Church of Scotland, by Mr Skinner, father to the 'present worthy Bishop of Aberdeen; a History com-'pre-

Sit laus una mihi, sacram docuisse cohortem,
Quam regit officii cura paterna tui;
Quomodo ab antiquis parva hæc Ecclesia seclis
Venerit ad nostras continuata manus,
Pura quidem, depressa licet, contemptaque mundo,
At Capiti in cælis charior inde suo:
Hanc volui primæ tandem ad vestigia formæ
Ductam per varias exposuisse vices.
Pars fuit et voti, si qua nunc fallere possem
Arte senectutis tædia dura pigræ.
Non solitum robur mihi nunc, nec ut ante labores
Languida consuetos carpere membra valent.
Diu mihi quo cani caput invasere capilli,
Jamque supra decimum me tria lustra premunt.
At manet ingenium, manet inconcussa facultas,
Lassitiemque levans utilitatis amor.
Qualia sint, tu ne mediocria nostra recuses
Quicquid censuræ gens inimica dabit.
Tu mihi consilium præbebas primus, opemque
Tu mihi scribendi suasor, et auctor eras.
Nunc igitur scripto solitum dignare favorem
Auxiliumque operi, quod potes, adde tuum;
Sic plures per te liber hic numerabit amicos,
Qui sine te parvi forsan habendus erit.

Vive, vale, titulo diu post mea funera digne
Præsulis, et grato gratus et ipse gregi:
Tuque mihi tamdiu solamen quale dedisti,
Diu det solamen stirpo tua tale *Tibi!*

'prehending a plain and unaffected detail of facts, very 'interesting and amusing.' * This was the great object which the Author had in view, to make his work "agreeably useful," and give it that happy mixture of *utile dulci*, what is instructive with what is pleasant, which would be the best means of recommending it to public favour, and which was the only means possessed by a writer who could not afford to pay a hireling Reviewer for puffing his work into general notice.†

In compiling what will now occupy a considerable part of this memoir, much assistance has been received from the Rev. George Gleig, L. L. D. at Stirling, (formerly a Presbyter, now a Bishop of the Scotch Episcopal Church), who having been applied to for what communications he might be able to afford, as a literary correspondent of the late Mr Skinner, had the goodness to offer his aid in the most friendly and handsome manner With this view he transmitted the following note to the person who made the application now mentioned:—

'The renewal of Mr. Skinner's correspondence and 'mine, which had been long interrupted, was occa- 'sioned by my connexion with the Encyclopædia Bri- 'tannica. For the third edition of that work, I was 'engaged by the proprietors to write a variety of ar- 'ticles; and when Mr. C. Macfarquhar died, the con- 'ducting of the publication was wholly entrusted to me. 'One of the articles, which, previous to his death, I had 'under-

* See vol. xii. p. 177. of the works of the Rev. William Jones, M. A. F. R. S.

† See in vol. iii. some Latin lines on the severity of a certain review of this Ecclesiastical History.

'undertaken to write, or rather to revise, was the article LANGUAGE; and as I considered, and still consider the question concerning the Origin of Language, as of great importance, I consulted on that subject every man of letters to whom I had access, and whose judgment I had reason to believe unbiassed by a fashionable, though superficial philosophy. Mr Skinner was one of those friends whom I thus consulted, and from him and Dr Doig I received more assistance, or rather more encouragement, than from all my other correspondents on the subject. I say encouragement, because they both approved of my own notions, which, to a young author, as I might then be said to be, is always encouraging. My letter to Mr Skinner was dated May the 21st, 1791; but I am extremely sorry to find that I have lost his answer to it. I recollect, however, perfectly, that he approved of my notions respecting the first words of the original language, as well as respecting the import of the Verb; but he advised me not to waste time in removing the difficulty which seemed to be thrown in my way by the Hebrew Lexicographers, but rather to shew how a variety of languages might, without a miracle, spring from one original source. I had the same advice from Dr Horne, then Dean of Canterbury: but the long note (page 534 of the Encycl. vol. 9) was not furnished by either of them, but by Dr Doig. I feel myself, however, at this moment, as much indebted to Mr Skinner for the light thrown on the subject by what he communicated to me, as when I wrote the following letter, expressive of my gratitude to him, which you are at liberty to publish.'—

Stirling,

Stirling, September 11th, 1791.

REV. SIR,

FOR your obliging letter of the 16th of May, I ought long ago to have returned my thanks. You are pleased to say, that you pretend not to instruct me; but you have actually instructed me, or what is better, put me upon a way of instructing myself. Your letter has been of great use to me, and I hope, you will find that I have used it to no bad purpose. It set me a thinking, and the result has been a perfect conviction, that there was no necessity for a miracle to introduce into the world different languages. I have finished the article, and sent it to the press. I was obliged, by the nature of the work for which I wrote, to state the arguments on both sides of the question; but what Johnson said of "the whig dogs," in his Debates in Parliament, may be said of my Essay on the Origin of Language, I have taken care that the *deist dogs* shall not have the better of the argument. Do not, from this, imagine that I have wilfully done them injustice. So far from that is the case, that I did nothing but abridge the reasoning of a celebrated author on the origin and progress of language, and where it appeared palpably weak, I reinforced it from Voltaire and another writer of the same school. Of the arguments on the other side, I can truly say, that by far the greater part is my own, suggested indeed by your letter. They may have been used by others, but I have not met with them in any book that I have consulted. I do not claim any merit from this circumstance; the merit, if there be any, is yours; but indeed they have probably been omitted by others, because they were so obvious. I am yours, &c. G. G.

The

'The subject on which Dr Gleig next consulted Mr Skinner, was PROPHECY, an article, which the Doctor says,—'I wished him to write, that it might not fall in-'to the hands of those who would treat it in a careless 'manner, and because, from what he had given to the 'world on a particular prophecy, he might be supposed 'capable of doing justice to the subject in general, shew-'ing it in a true light, as a matter of the highest im-'portance. He declined it however, but sent to me 'the observations which constitute the paragraph mark-'ed No. 4. in the printed article. That paragraph was 'printed verbatim, or nearly verbatim, from his letter; 'and for the remainder of the article I am myself an-'swerable, having then the sole management of the work.'

In the summer of 1792 Dr Gleig had the opportunity of a personal interview with Mr Skinner, which produced a closer intimacy than had before subsisted between them, and to this intimacy the Doctor thus refers;—'One consequence of it was, that he expressed 'a wish to know what articles I had written for the En-'cyclopædia; a wish, with which, as it did me honour, 'I of course readily complied. Of some of those ar-'ticles I likewise furnished him with copies, as well as 'of others, in which I thought he would be interested, 'either on account of the subjects discussed, or for the 'sake of their authors; and the merits or demerits of 'those articles furnished matter for much of our future 'correspondence. In a letter which is lost, he had ob-'jected very justly to several things in the article Mo-'RAL PHILOSOPHY, thinking, if my memory does not 'deceive me, that I had the charge of the work when 'that

'that article was printed. This produced the following 'letter from me, of January the 11th, 1794.—

'When the article *Moral Philosophy* was going 'through the press, I was not Editor of that great 'work. I was indeed often consulted by the Editor, 'and by him on this very subject. But when I pro- 'posed to give him a short system of *Ethics*, founded 'on religion, and the hope of immortality, he expressed 'his dread of making his work unpopular, and would 'not listen to my proposal. He told me, that he had 'resolved to adopt the system originally published in 'the *Preceptor*, and written, I think, by Fordyce of 'Marischal College, Aberdeen; but he wished me to 'prefix a short History of the Science, and make any 'little alteration which I might think expedient. It 'appeared to me, that by complying with this request, 'I might do some good, as I could shew the reader 'where he might find safer guides in morals, than the 'tract immediately before him; and the History, with 'one or two interpolated passages in the system, is mine. 'I need not say where the historical part begins or ends; 'but it may be worth while to observe, that in the sys- 'tem, I am answerable for nothing, but the 2d column 'of page 301, and the first column of page 302 down 'to paragraph marked 258, the paragraph marked 159, 'and the latter part of paragraph marked 239; I am 'likewise answerable for the insertion of the extract 'from Hume, page 304; for, when I found the Editor 'determined to retain the vile paragraph about the *Ma-* 'jesty of the People, and the *Duty of Resistance*, I 'thought it could not injure the reader, to lay before

'him on this subject, the sentiments of a man, of whom 'it cannot be said, that he was warped by religious pre- 'judice, or that he had not opportunities of studying the 'principles of politics. I feel myself much obliged to you 'for the freedom, with which you have given me your 'sentiments respecting the article MIRACLES. On that 'subject I cannot perhaps think precisely as you do, 'but I believe our greatest difference lies in our lan- 'guage. You object to the phrase *Laws of Nature*. 'Will you forgive me when I say, that your objection 'is founded on needless scrupulosity? I speak of the 'Laws of Nature, as I do of the Laws of England or 'Scotland. It is common language, and universally 'understood; though when the radical import of the 'word *of* is attended to, it must be confessed not to be 'grammatically correct. No man ever supposes that 'the laws of England or Scotland were enacted by Eng- 'land or Scotland, nor did any man ever suppose that 'the laws of Nature were enacted by Nature. To the 'word *Nature*, I know, that objections may be started, 'as indeed they may to the use of almost any word; 'but in experimental philosophy, and in the question 'about Miracles, Nature is of the same import with the 'visible universe. It will be said, that dead matter, of 'which the greater part of the universe consists, cannot 'be subject to *law* in the proper sense of the word, be- 'cause *law* necessarily supposes *reason* and *will* in the 'beings which are subject to it. This is readily grant- 'ed; but to guard against the objection, which how- 'ever I hardly expected to be made, I was at some 'pains to shew the reader, that by the *Laws of Nature* 'I meant nothing more than a settled course of things,

'or

'or an order of causes and effects established in every 'part of the system of nature, which falls under our ob- 'servation. Were not this a fact, no man would sow 'in Spring with the well-grounded hope of reaping in 'Autumn, or have reason to expect that the sun will 'rise, when once descended below the horizon. I am 'as much convinced as any man can be, that mankind 'would have known nothing of nature, or of nature's 'God, without an original Revelation; but I am like- 'wise convinced that this Revelation was not made by *a* 'written book. Now the question between the Infidels 'and us, I apprehend to be, respecting the origin of the 'Old and New Testaments, or, to speak more properly, 'concerning the evidence of the doctrine taught in those 'books. Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles, de- 'clare, that they received their doctrine from God; 'but, say the Infidels, what proof have we that those 'men were so highly favoured by the common Father 'of mankind? The question cannot be deemed unrea- 'sonable, and I know not what answer can be given to 'it, other than that of our blessed Saviour, "If ye be- 'lieve not me, believe me for the works' sake, &c." 'and, "If I had not wrought among them the works 'which never man wrought, &c." To this the Infidel re- 'plies, that those works were sufficient proofs to those who 'saw them performed; but he insists, that we have no good 'evidence of the works themselves, and Hume has en- 'deavoured to prove, that of such works, said to be per- 'formed in a remote age, no complete evidence can be 'given. Surely there can be no impropriety in attempt- 'ing to shew, that, upon the very principles of this hero 'of infidelity, the miracles recorded in the scriptures

'*must undoubtedly* have been wrought, and I even think 'it some advantage to the cause of the Christian, that he 'is able to turn the adversary's weapons against himself. 'In all this you and I may differ, though I see not how 'it is possible; but while we are equally zealous for the 'common faith, I am sure that we shall differ in the 'spirit of meekness. Whether I shall ever republish in 'a different form the article in the Encyclopædia, is at 'present doubtful; for I have got as much work upon 'my hands as would fully employ prompter talents than 'I possess. If I do republish, you may depend upon my 'paying every possible attention to your observations, as 'well as upon my being at some pains to use precise and 'well defined terms. Dr Doig is the author of "*Mytho-'logy*" and "*Mysteries.*" In my opinion the latter 'stands unrivalled in the English language. Of *Mytho-'logy* I cannot think so highly. It displays, no doubt, 'learning; but it is a meagre article, and has laid me 'under the necessity of writing *Polytheism.*"

To this letter Dr Gleig received the following answer, which he calls an "admirable letter," and thinks it may with great propriety be published:

Linshart, March 8th, 1794.

'Your agreeable favour of the 11th of January came 'to hand in course, and gave me great satisfaction. I 'am particularly pleased with what you write about that 'strange sounding paragraph to which I had objected.— 'In reading over the article in general, I thought I met 'with some traits of your pencil, which I could not re-'concile to the designed structure of the whole piece, 'especially to the unmethodical, and in my opinion, un-

'neces-

'necessary conclusion about the "majesty of the peo-
'ple," which to me appears to have no more connection
'with Moral Philosophy, than it has with Astronomy
'or Mathematics. But you have fully removed my
'scruples, and I thank you for the candid manner in
'which you have received my blunt way of expressing
'my dissatisfaction. I have attentively read over the
'two articles "MYSTERIES" and "MYTHOLOGY,"
'and think equally well of both, at the same time that
'in both I perceive a defect, but such indeed as I find
'common in great writers on the subject. As to *myste-*
'ries, I cannot help thinking that the religion, which, I
'persuade myself, this sensible writer admires, presents
'us with many things under that denomination, in its
'grand foundation, in the various parts of its œconomy,
'and in the blessed design of the great whole. And as
'the article is entitled "*Mysteries*" in general, without
'any particular restriction, I could have wished, that
'the things I have in my eye, and which I am warrant-
'ed to assign, under the character of mysteries, to the
'religion alluded to, had been brought into the account,
'and made a part of the elaborate and nicely arranged
'description: especially as the word itself, by the learn-
'ed writer's own explication, belongs to the language
'of a people, who had their religion immediately from
'heaven, and thereby, I think, shews that the thing sig-
'nified by that word, had been known to, and as we
'might say, *in the religious possession* of, the people of
'that language; similar to what may be observed of
'many things of foreign growth, which are now fami-
'liar to us, under the names given to them by the people
'from whom we had them, such as tea, tobacco, pota-
'toes,

'toes, &c. May not the same be supposed of 'Mysteries?' And if so, what shall we think of the introduction to this article, which tells us, that "the Jewish 'dispensation was openly practised, nothing was performed in secret, every article was plain, open, and 'accessible," when it is certain, that the grand article 'of it, upon which the efficacy of all the rest depended, 'was "performed in secret," and was not "accessible" 'to any but to the chief Hierophant alone, and to him 'only *once* in the year? * I shall no doubt be told, that 'the writer had not these real SACREDS in his view, and 'I shall only say, that I am sorry for it, as from such a 'pen I would have expected an accurate discussion of my 'favourite topic. Yet even on his own adopted plan, 'I miss something which I reckon material in all dissertations of this kind; so material indeed, that the dignity of the Jewish dispensation, and consequently of 'its Christian offspring, depends in a great measure 'upon it; I mean the point, the leading point of CHRONOLOGY. We read a great deal of the "Egyptian 'mysteries," of Osiris and Isis, &c. which are generally held out to us, as the parents of the Theban, the 'Thracian, the Eleusinian, and even the Persian observances of that kind. But we are not told when 'these Egyptian rites began, or by whom they were 'instituted, whether they were *originals*, or *copies*; in 'short, whether they were *prior* or *posterior* to Moses. 'This point of chronology I take to be so essential to 'every thing that passes for historical narration, that the 'inquisitive mind can have little satisfaction without it; 'and in this point the Mosaic account of things must be

'allowed

* Heb. ix. 7—28.

'allowed to have the undisputed preference. For my 'own part, I look upon Moses to be the *oldest* and *fullest* 'writer of even Egyptian antiquities that is extant, 'many ages prior to their famed Manetho, who has laid 'the ground-work of all the subsequent fuss about them: 'and in all that Moses writes of the Egyptians, from 'Abraham's first visit to them, down to the time of the 'Exodus, through a course of more than four hundred 'years, we find not the least trace of the Osirian mys-'teries, nor any thing that points at modes of worship, 'which, had they been in observance then, with all the 'solemnity of pomp which after-times have affixed to 'them, it is not to be thought that such a writer as 'Moses, and with such a design, would have altogether 'overlooked. At the Exodus, indeed, we read of the "Gods of Egypt," as in opposition to "the God of 'the Hebrews," but no names or designations given to 'them, while the ELOHIM of the Hebrews is always 'distinguished by the name JEHOVAH: And in all 'that long contention for superiority between JEHOVAH 'and his rivals, whoever they were, we may suppose 'some notice would have been taken of Osiris, Isis, '&c. if they had been in fashion at the time, or known 'to the Egyptians of those days. From this conside-'ration, among many others, I have been long led to 'conclude, that the Osirian mummeries, of whose in-'troduction we know no date, have been posterior to 'Moses, and may therefore, without any great stretch 'of fancy, be considered as imitations and gradual cor-'ruptions of the Mosaic system. I know what great 'names are against me in this opinion, Spencer, Mar-'sham, &c. and that there are others, Bochart, Gale,

'Wit-

'Witsius, &c. on my side. It will also be said, that 'Aaron's golden calf appears to have been a copy of the 'Egyptian Bull-god Apis, who makes as conspicuous a 'figure in the Egyptian kalendar as Osiris or Isis. But 'is it not as likely that Apis was not the pattern, but the 'copy only? I know to what foolish, even horrid 'lengths imagination may go. But it has its bounds, 'and a "ne plus ultra" set to it. Upon given mate-'rials it may work strangely, "humano capiti cervicem 'jungere equinam;" but it can *create* none. The devil 'himself, with all his powers of imagination, could not 'make a *new object*, but was obliged to take hold of 'one made to his hand, in his first and fatal delusion 'of man: And all his votaries ever since, priests, poets, 'and philosophers, have gone on in the same track of 'seizing upon prior and traditional institutions or tran-'sactions, and perverting them into their new-fangled 'mysteries. Upon this hypothesis, fully as plausible as 'any other on the subject, it is easy to discover, and 'account for the original of the laboured fabric of Pa-'gan mythology, if not in every diversified particular, 'yet in the general architecture of the whole. Your 'friend tells us, that "the mysteries were the offspring 'of bigotry and priestcraft." But who, or what were 'these priests? *Priests* and *religion* are allowed to be 'correlates. What then was the religion of the priests, 'before the invention and introduction of the mysteries? 'This, with me at least, is a principal "desideratum," 'and I regret the want of it. He tells us farther, in con-'futation of Warburton's and Mosheim's hypothesis, 'that "the mysteries were performed in secret;" 'which strengthens my hypothesis of both the author

'and

'and design of them; and convinces me, that the main 'view of the grand deceiver, in all his rebellious usur-'pations of divine things, has always been to keep out 'of sight, as much as possible, the GREAT MYSTERY, '(1 Tim. iii. 16.) of which he knew the reality to his 'cost, or by his cursed perversions and superinductions, 'to turn it to his own account. There are some other 'matters of less moment in the article before me, at 'which I stumble, such as the character given of the 'ancient Egyptians, (paragraph 11.) that they were a "gloomy unsocial race of men." This does not at all 'comport with the idea that Moses gives me of them in 'Abraham's, or even in Joseph's time. And the "in-'hospitableness to strangers," for which they are said to 'have been so infamous in what are vaguely called an-'cient times, (paragraph 20.) may, if true, have been 'owing to their remembrance of the sad catastrophe to 'their King and nation, occasioned by a set of "stran-'gers," whom they had for more than two hundred 'years entertained, for the most part very kindly. So 'again where it is said (paragraph 20) that "Cadmus is '*universally* allowed to have been an Egyptian," I am 'rather surprised at the assertion, as all that I had ever 'heard of that hero of antiquity, whether real or fabu-'lous, who is said to have first brought "letters" into 'Greece, had led me to suppose him a Phœnician, or in 'general a man of the "east," as his name in Hebrew 'imports, and I do not know that the Greeks ever class-'ed the Egyptians among those whom they called Orien-'tals. There is likewise a sentence in paragraph 17, 'which, I wish, had been either omitted, or otherwise 'expressed: "To them it was given to know the mys-

'teries of the kingdom of darkness, but to those who 'were without, all was mystery or parable." This has 'such an affinity of sound with what is said by the high-'est authority (St Mark iv. 11.) that the Infidels, or 'balancing believers, may, I am afraid, contrary to the 'writer's intention, wrest the striking allusion to counte-'nance the trite sneer, that "priests of all religions are 'the same." I come now to the principal, and pro-'perly personal part of your letter, respecting *your own* 'article "Miracle," which notwithstanding your mo-'desty in the introduction of your friend's two articles, 'I think, both in the matter and manner of it, prefer-'able. You are quite in the right where you take any 'difference between you and me to be only "in our lan-'guage." What I said about the "Laws of Nature," 'was in the "person" of an infidel or sceptic, who will 'still take hold of that vague term, to carp against it; 'and any definition that can be given of it, even your 'last definition—"a stated course of things, or an order 'of causes and effects, established in every part of the 'system of nature which falls under our observation," 'will not be allowed to pass, without some fault being 'found with it: For, excepting the astronomical part 'of the system, where yet perhaps our observations are 'not absolutely certain, I know no other "course of 'things" in which there is not a variation more or 'less, like the variation of the magnetic needle, 'to be observed at some times, and in some pla-'ces, which I could exemplify, if necessary, in many 'instances. It is not therefore the *proof* of what 'is called a "miracle," that I am disposed to ob-'ject to, but to the philosophic definition of it, as

"a

" a deviation from the laws of nature," which I would ' change into the more intelligible expression of " a ' work which none but God could perform." Your own ' quotation of our Saviour's words justifies this defini- ' tion. He calls what he did " *works*," " *works of God*," " *works which no man ever did*," &c. And indeed many ' of his works are such as will not come under the philo- ' sophic definition, and yet are confessedly " *miraculous*." ' His own list (St Matt. xi. 5.) of the " blind," the " lame," the " lepers," the " deaf," presents to my mind ' not " a deviation from," but a restoration of " the laws ' of nature, which, under your own explication of " a stat- ' ed course of things," state, I think, the general con- ' dition of mankind to be otherwise. Even his feeding " the thousands" with a few loaves, may be accounted ' for according to my hypothesis, as it may be supposed ' that the quantity of grain which composed the loaves, ' might, if sown, have produced one sufficient repast ' for the thousands; and the same divine power which ' was necessary for working the *increase* in the *ground* ' could operate as *naturally* in the *basket*. His stilling ' the sea was no deviation from the " laws of nature," ' but rather a bringing it back to its natural state; and ' what shall we think of his " driving the buyers and ' sellers out of the temple," which I take to be almost as ' great a miracle as any, according to my idea, but no way ' included in the philosophic definition. Let the experi- ' ment be tried by an obscure fisherman or carpenter's ' son, from any of the neighbouring villages, upon the ' motley group of stall-keepers, who carry on their petty ' traffic in the vestibule of the Outer House of Session in ' Edinburgh, and the result, I dare say, would confirm

'my opinion. There is a passage in the Psalms, which 'I have long thought a prophetic allusion to our Savi- 'our's power in these two last instances: (Ps. lxv. 7.) "Who stillest the raging of the sea, and the noise of his "waves, and the madness (tumult) of the people," 'where the climax points to the preference, which per- 'haps has some analogy to what is said at the fourth 'verse, about "the pleasures, or goodness of God's "house." Excuse these desultory hints, not as objec- 'tions to the *probation* of miracles, but as offering a *plan*, 'detached from all foreign argument, for founding that 'probation upon; and conducting it with as much pro- 'bability of success as has hitherto appeared. I wish you 'would take it in hand (if you think it any way feasible), 'as, from the propriety of language, and clearness of me- 'thod which I have observed in such of your produc- 'tions as I have seen, I would expect such corroboration 'of the 'common cause,' as, whether it convinced the 'proud Infidel or not, would mightily edify and confirm 'the humble Believer. What little assistance is in my 'weak power I would willingly contribute to such an at- 'tempt, if made, and shall be happy, if "fungar vice "cotis, acutum reddere quæ ferrum valet, exsors ipsa "secandi."

The definition of a 'Miracle' given by Mr Skinner in this letter, he afterwards admitted, would not be proper in a discussion with philosophical unbelievers, and therefore seemed to acquiesce in that which his correspondent had made use of. This is stated on Dr Gleig's authority, who added the following remarks;—'I have no de- 'sire that you should mention this on my own account; 'but

'but I think it would be creditable to Mr Skinner; for 'we really do not know, in numberless instances, what 'works are such as God only can perform. Perhaps 'there is nothing short of *creation*, which some of the 'most exalted orders of created Intelligences might not, 'with the divine permission, perform; though without 'that permission, the most powerful of them could per-'form nothing.'

The subject which came next to be discussed between Dr Gleig and Mr Skinner, is thus detailed in a letter from the former, dated the 31st of March, 1794:—'A-'bout the time that I received your letter of the 8th curt. 'I was thinking of writing to you on as puzzling a ques-'tion as ever occurred to me in the history of literature 'and science. But till this moment I have not found 'leisure to put my intention into execution. I now do 'it however, with sanguine hopes of receiving at least 'part of that information which I so much want. In our 'great work, the word *Philosophy* will soon occur in 'the order of the alphabet, and I have got from Pro-'fessor Robinson of Edinburgh, the finest view of the 'present philosophy, and the best rules for conducting 'philosophical enquiries, that I have ever seen. This 'however is not enough to complete the article. Ac-'cording to the plan of the Encyclopædia, a short His-'tory of Philosophy must be given; and this I have 'written myself, in a manner that meets the learned Pro-'fessor's warmest approbation. In my sketch you will 'not be surprised, that the philosophy of ancient Egypt 'should make a conspicuous appearance. It was con-'fessedly the source of Grecian science, and, if I mis-

'take

'take not, of the religion and philosophy of the Brah-
'mins in India. But what was the source of Egyptian
'wisdom? That they were as learned and wise in the
'days of Moses as they were at a subsequent period, the
'sacred scriptures will not permit me to doubt; and that
'at a subsequent period they were acquainted with the
'true solar system, is so well vouched by Greek and Latin
'writers, that it would be unreasonable in the highest
'degree to question the fact. Aristotle, Plutarch, and
'Ammianus Marcellinus, affirm that Pythagoras was in
'Egypt, taught not only what we believe to be the true
'system of the sun, but, what is more extraordinary,
'the doctrine of comets in particular, and of their revo-
'lutions round the sun's centre with the other planets;
"Stellas quasdam," says the Roman Historian, "ceteris
"similes, quarum ortus, obitusque, quibus sint tempo-
"ribus præstituti humanis mentibus ignorari." (lib. 25.
'c. 10). At the same time that the Egyptian priests
'gave this wonderful piece of information to the Greek
'sages, it appears beyond a doubt, that they themselves
'were comparatively but poor Mathematicians. Pytha-
'goras, we are told, spent twenty two years in Egypt,
'studying the science of Geometry and Astronomy, and
'yet he discovered, after his return to Samos, the 47th
'proposition of Euclid's first book. This is doubtless a
'very useful, but in itself a very simple Theorem, and
'since it was not reached by the Egyptian Geometry, we
'cannot suppose that those people had then reached far
'in such speculations. The same conclusion must be
'drawn with respect to their Astronomical sciences; for,
'notwithstanding their knowledge of what is now termed
'the Copernican system, we nowhere read (that I know

'of)

'of), that they ever pretended to dispute with Thales 'the honour of having first calculated an Eclipse of the 'Sun. From this fact it appears to me, that what sci- 'ence the Egyptians had in the days of Pythagoras, they 'inherited as traditional maxims, handed down from 'their remote ancestors, of which they neither question- 'ed the truth, nor enquired into the reasons. This 'seems to be farther evident, from the mode of teaching 'adopted by Pythagoras himself, which was dogmatical, 'and not systematical; and of this we need no better 'proof, than that his doctrine of the Solar system was 'totally neglected by the Greeks, as soon as they began 'to frame hypotheses, and to speculate in philosophy. 'But the question returns:—By whom were the Egyp- 'tians taught the Astronomical maxim of the planets re- 'volving round the sun? It must have been some person 'of the highest authority, since he gave credit to a max- 'im apparently contrary to the evidence of sense, and 'yet, as far as we know, assigned no mathematical or 'philosophical reason for his opinion. I need not tell 'you, that the Egyptians attributed the invention of all 'arts and sciences to their first *Thoth*. But who was he? 'They tell us that he was the minister of Osiris. But 'of Osiris we know as little as of Thoth; and it seems 'altogether inconceivable that any Minister of State, not 'inspired with heavenly wisdom, should have been able 'to make the learned of a whole nation adopt such a 'theory as that of the diurnal and annual motions of the 'Earth, without assigning any reasons for that theory. 'Yet if I could see any good evidence in scripture, that 'the solar system was understood by the ancient Hebrews, 'the story of Thoth being the minister of Osiris would

'lead

'lead me very forcibly to attribute the origin of Egyptian 'science to Joseph, who was certainly able, without the 'parade of analogical reasoning, to give credit to any 'thing which he might advance as truth. This hypothe-'sis, which would make Joseph the first Thoth, seems 'to receive some countenance from what Manetho tells 'us of the loss and revival of Egyptian learning. Ac-'cording to him, the written monuments of the first 'Thoth were lost or neglected in certain civil revolutions, 'or natural calamities which befell the kingdom of E-'gypt;—that after many ages, part of them were reco-'vered by an ingenious interpretation of the symbols 'which he had inscribed upon ancient columns, and that 'the man who made this interpretation was the second 'Thoth, or Hermes Trismegistus. But '*thrice illus-'trious*' as this interpreter must be, it is at least possible, 'that he was much inferior to the former Hermes or 'Thoth, and that he was able to read his writings, and 'transcribe his conclusions, without knowing any thing 'of the principles that led to these conclusions. If there 'be evidence in scripture, which, I confess, I do not 'see, that the revolution of the planets round the sun 'was known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, &c. no-'thing can be more natural, than to suppose that this 'knowledge would be communicated by them to the 'Egyptian priesthood, that Moses might learn this from 'the Egyptian priest whose daughter he married, and 'that, though the doctrine might be retained, the evi-'dence which he gave of its truth, would be lost among 'an idolatrous and corrupted people, long before the 'æra of Pythagoras, or even of Manetho's Hermes 'Trismegistus. Now, my dear Sir, what I beg of you,

'is,

'is, to tell me what view the beginning of the Book of 'Genesis gives of the solar system to a real critic in the 'Hebrew language? I am by no means such a critic, 'nor have I read any criticism, which, upon this sub-'ject, gives me sufficient evidence that the ancient He-'brews had any notion of the motions of the earth. But 'my knowledge of the sacred language is scanty, and 'yours is the reverse; and from you I hope for that sa-'tisfaction in a few sentences, which hitherto I have not 'found in many volumes. As the article *Philosophy* 'will go to the press in the course of four or five weeks, 'I shall expect a return to this letter as soon as you can 'conveniently give it me. I had mentioned to Dr Doig 'the objections which you urge against Cadmus' Egyp-'tian origin, but was satisfied that in a short article like 'ours, we could not easily give him another origin. My 'learned friend does not *think* that he was an Egyptian; 'but as Strabo and Diodorus Siculus both affirm that he 'was, and that he travelled first from Egypt into Phœ-'nicia, and then into Greece, we could not call in ques-'tion such authorities, without assigning reasons for so 'doing; and these would have introduced much etymo-'logical disquisition, which would have rendered the 'article dry and prolix. As it is of little importance in 'what country Cadmus was born, the Doctor, though 'he delights in etymology, was disposed to admit the tes-'timony of the two ancients, rather than introduce such 'a discussion. His own opinion is a very singular one, 'which however he supports with great ingenuity; but 'the limits of my paper tell me, that I must delay my ac-'count of it to a future letter. In the article '*Philology*,' 'you will find an able account of the priority of the He-

'brew to all other languages, and a no less able proof of 'the novelty of the Masoretic points. The most ingeni- 'ous section, however, is that which treats of the Greek 'language, which he traces up to a Hebrew original.'

To what is stated in the foregoing letter, Dr Gleig received from Mr Skinner the following answer, dated April 16th, 1794:—'Your last came to hand in course, 'and I am obliged to you for starting some new amuse- 'ment to me, at the same time that I would wish you 'not to entertain too sanguine hopes of satisfaction, from 'any assistance I can give in the way of an answer to 'your present question. Your compliment is too high, 'in supposing me such an adept in the sacred language, 'as might be inferred from your applying to me on this 'occasion. I have indeed been poring into it almost 'fifty years, but I am far from thinking that my attain- 'ments in it, however satisfying to myself, should or 'will be satisfying to others. The point, which you now 'propose, is no doubt, as you call it, 'a *puzzling* one.' 'But whether that be owing to intrinsic difficulty, or ex- 'trinsic prepossession, is a question. You know, there 'has long prevailed an opinion that the sacred scriptures 'were not designed to teach philosophy, and what a 'handle has been made of this popular conceit to dispa- 'rage Revelation. Under the weight therefore of this 'prejudice, it will not be easy to produce 'evidence' of 'such clear and convincing force, as modern philosophy 'requires, although from 'analogical reasoning' it might 'be supposed, if not concluded, that the original con- 'struction and disposition of the 'mundane system' was 'above the reach of human discovery, and could be no- 'tified

'tified only by the great Constructor and Disposer of it: 'It may therefore be justly inferred, that, if the Pythago- 'rean or Copernican hypothesis be the true one, it must 'have been early known, and known too by means of 'Revelation, whether *by*, or *prior to* Moses. You ask, "What view the beginning of the Book of Genesis gives "of the solar system to a real critic in the Hebrew lan- "guage?' I do not pretend to be such a critic, but I 'cannot help thinking, that your way of stating the ques- 'tion is rather partial and limited. The first chapter of 'Genesis is certainly a system of philosophy, intended, 'as I take it, to settle the great fundamental point, which 'began early to be perverted, and continued to suffer 'under that perversion, as far down as the famed æra of 'philosophic illumination among the Grecians, if what 'is said be true, that Anaxagoras, the third in succession 'from Thales, was the first of the Ionic school who 'brought a creating, or at least a disposing νους into 'the system. It appears from the writings of Moses, 'that in his time, the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, the *host 'of heaven*, as he calls them, were the prevailing objects 'of worship among the idolatrous nations; not as substi- 'tutes only, but as principals, especially the sun, who, 'as universal Lord, is generally thought to have been 'pointed to under the subsequent titles of Baal, Chemosh, 'Moloch, &c. so current in the sacred Books. To com- 'bat this fatal error, so hurtful both to theology and 'philosophy, would seem to have been the design of the 'first chapter of Genesis, where that most ancient of all 'writers, divines, philosophers, or historians, clearly, 'and of set purpose, decides this essential point, by at- 'tributing the origin of these heathen deities, whom he

'acknowledges to be (Meshlim, αρχοντες) Rulers, in one 'sense, by *appointment*, to an Almighty Creator; without perhaps entering, as he well could, into a minute 'description of their respective positions, aspects, motions or orbits, which have so much employed the sages 'of after-times. I have made but a *perhaps* of this, 'though I know that some late enquirers into these matters have thought, that the very evidence, which you 'wish for, is to be found, by deduction, in that short 'abstract of the history of the creation, which, for my 'own part, while I see and admire the 'rationale' of it, 'I am yet afraid, will not appear in the same light to 'most of the readers of your Encyclopædia. It is enough, that there is nothing in that chapter of Genesis, 'which has the least semblance of contradicting the Copernican system, or countenancing the vulgar notion 'of the earth's rest: and any thing that looks that way, 'either in Moses or the Prophets, can be, and has been, 'shewn to be owing to the imperfection of our language, 'and to the want of correctness in our translators. This 'indeed may seem to be but an invidious observation; 'but it requires no great proficiency in the sacred language to perceive the justness of it. Hence it is, that 'Moses is made to say, that the moon is a 'great light,' 'contrary to the philosophic certainty of the moon being 'a mass of dark opaque matter; whereas Moses calls 'neither sun nor moon '*lights*,' but only '*luminaries*,' '*candlesticks*, as it were, or *lamps* (compare St Matthew 'vi. 22.), that is, *vessels* for receiving light, in conformity to what he had said before of the production of 'light, three days prior to the sun, which was formed 'only on the fourth day, *to hold the light*, then collect-

'ed

'ed into one globe or sphere. Yet, in opposition to this 'express declaration, which is of more importance than 'is commonly thought, all philosophy, ancient and mo-'dern, has called the sun the 'parent of light,' and 'from this title, even theological deductions have been 'drawn, without any solid foundation. Here too, from "ar alogical reasoning," it might be argued, that they, 'who, after losing sight of the original revelation, had, 'with a religious view, begun to look up to the sun 'as the *Beelsamin*, Lord of heaven, would, in a philo-'sophical view, and from the example of earthly lords, 'be led to assign him a palace, court, fixed domicilium 'in heaven, from whence he might issue his orders for 'the government of universal nature. That part of this 'opinion had some foundation in truth, appears from a 'passage of scripture, posterior indeed to Moses, but 'very clear and decisive, so far as the description is car-'ried. In the nineteenth psalm, we read, that in 'the heavens God 'hath *set* a *tabernacle* for the sun, "which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, "&c.' So then there is something *set*, or *fixed* in the 'heavens, that something may come forth from it. 'But the '*tabernacle set*' can only denote the orb, globe, 'or body formed on the fourth day, and the 'comer "forth' must be the 'shemesh,' the efflux of light in 'rays from the fixed orb. Our language, like the 'Greek and Latin, has but *one* vocable for *three* distinct 'words, relative to this subject in Hebrew, '*heres*, *ha-"mah*, and *shemesh*,' all which we promiscuously read '*sun*, and it is on the footing of this radical defect, that 'the scripture philosophy has been represented as con-'fused and erroneous. Yet our very peasantry, though

'they

'they speak improperly, are sensible of a difference of 'meaning, as, although they say, 'the *sun* comes in at "the window,' they know it is not the *body* of the sun, 'or in their phrase '*the sun himself*,' but only some-'thing issuing from him, which they cannot philosophi-'cally explain, but which, was Hebrew vernacular in 'this country, they would call *shemesh*. It also appears 'to me, that this description, in a *literal* sense, (for the '*typical* is not before me at present) points to a *reflux* 'as well as to an *efflux*, to something like a bridegroom "returning' to his chamber, in a perpetual motion, 'out "and in,' from the centre to the circumference, and 'back from the circumference to the centre of 'created "nature,' contrary to the postulatum of modern philo-'sophy, which supposes that the solar rays fly off into "infinite space,' and are there absorbed. The Psalmist 'likewise tells us, that 'nothing is hid from the heat 'thereof,' *mehamtu*, that is, from his *hamah*, one of 'the three words for sun, the *hamah* either of the *she-'mesh*, or of Him who 'set the tabernacle.' But I am 'in danger of wandering too far from the point in hand. 'You seem very fond of the idea of the Egyptians being 'the propagators of philosophic science, and those who 'adopt this opinion build much on the testimony of St. 'Stephen (Acts vii. 27.), which only goes to prove that 'Moses possessed what 'wisdom' the Egyptians then 'had, without specifying what that wisdom was, or how 'far it extended. I should rather think that the Chal-'deans, from among whom the Hebrews came, had a bet-'ter title to this honour; since it is more likely that "phi-'losophic truth" would be found in the line of blessed '*Shem*, than among the descendants of graceless *Ham*.

'There

'There has long been a tradition in the east, that Abra-
'ham taught philosophy wherever he went, and we have
'a tradition long before Manetho, and equally as crè-
'dible, that "Joseph taught the Egyptian senators wis-
'dom," and was dignified by their king with the pom-
'pous name of "Psonthomphanech, Revealer of Se-
'crets." If therefore Manetho must be credited for his
'two *Thoths*, may not Abraham have been the *first*,
'and Joseph the *second* of them, disguised under addi-
'tional varnish from intervening ages, out of national
'contempt of the Hebrews, and national pride of them-
'selves? If so, the Hebrew school will be found to
'have been the first philosophic school, and all subse-
'quent ones only "*traduces*" from that truly ALMA
'MATER. Whether or how far the writers in that
'school, from Moses downward, delivered the true
'philosophy of nature, must be learned, as every kind of
'important knowledge is, by diligent and unprejudiced
'investigation, (ερευνατε τας γραφας—St. John, v. 39.)
'conducted according to the known rules of grammar,
'and with proper attention to "Etymologic" derivation.
'I am aware how much etymological argument is now-
'a-days despised: But I know as much of the peculiar
'construction of the sacred language as to be certain,
'that without the assistance of etymology it cannot be
'thoroughly understood, nor its precious contents fully
'valued. At the same time it is not to be expected that
'the Scriptures should exhibit a distinct and arranged
'system, with all the necessary proofs and particulari-
'ties so minutely described in after-ages. For, however
'useful and agreeable such knowledge may be to a phi-
'losophic genius, it appears to have been but a secondary

'con-

'consideration with the inspired penmen, whose principal object was the glory of Jehovah Aleim, and the great mystery of redemption by the "Seed of the Woman." Of this we are assured by CHRIST himself; and yet the "evidence" for it has been called in question, and its clearness evaded and obscured by artful glosses. And so it might have happened to philosophy, had the Scriptures treated of it in a more copious manner, which yet is no objection to the intrinsic evidence, in different proportions, for either. In a work therefore like the Encyclopædia, which is rather narratory than controversial, I should see no impropriety in mentioning, that the true philosophy of the Solar System is thought, by no bad judges of the Hebrew tongue, to be met with in Scripture, notwithstanding what appearances to the contrary may have arisen from the insufficiency of other languages to express the full force of the wonderfully significant original. And, as it is presumable that a Pythagorean, even the great Sir Isaac Newton himself, when talking or writing upon other subjects, would speak in common style of "the Sun rising and setting," without the risk of any imputation on the philosophic principles, which he has so ably illustrated, why not pay the sacred writers the same compliment, especially as their language gave them opportunity of more distinctness than most translators, without much periphrasis, had in their power? But there is a prejudice, somehow or other, against the good old Hebrew, and in favour of a nescio quid, which I am sorry for, but cannot help. Meantime,

'Quæ nunc disjunctim scripsi, tu collige in unum;
'Et si quid valeant, utere; vive, vale.

What

What was said in the preceding letter of the body of the sun, seems to have been almost an anticipation of the theory of the celebrated Dr Herschel on that subject. In No. 3. of the first part of the philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London for 1795, after stating the various opinions which different philosophers have entertained with regard to the nature and properties of the sun, Dr Herschel proceeds to detail the many observations which the superior excellence of his instruments enabled him to make on that body, and to these he joins the consequences which he believed himself entitled to draw from them. The result of these observations the Doctor himself thus states. 'That the sun has a very 'extensive atmosphere cannot be doubted, and that this 'atmosphere consists of various elastic fluids that are 'more or less lucid and transparent, and of which the 'lucid one is that which furnishes us with light, seems 'also to be fully established by all the phenomena of its 'spots, of the fæculæ, and of the lucid surface itself. 'There is no kind of variety in these appearances but 'what may be accounted for, with the greatest facility, 'from the continual agitation which, we may easily 'conceive, must take place in the regions of such exten-'sive elastic fluids. It will be necessary, however, to be 'a little more particular as to the manner in which, I 'suppose, the lucid fluid of the sun to be generated in 'its atmosphere. An analogy that may be drawn from 'the generation of clouds, in our own atmosphere, 'seems to be a very proper one, and full of instruction. 'Our clouds are probably decompositions of some of the 'elastic fluids of the atmosphere itself, when such natu-'ral causes, as in this grand chemical laboratory are ge-

'nerally at work, act upon them: We may therefore 'admit, that in the very extensive atmosphere of the 'sun, from causes of the same nature, similar phœno- 'mena will take place, but with this difference, that the 'continual and very extensive decompositions of the 'elastic fluids of the sun are of a phosphoric nature, and 'attended with lucid appearances, by giving out light. 'If it should be objected, that such violent and unre- 'mitting decompositions would exhaust the sun, we 'may recur again to our analogy, which will furnish 'us with the following reflections. The extent of our 'own atmosphere, we see, is still preserved, notwith- 'standing the copious decompositions of its fluids in 'clouds and falling rain; in flashes of lightning, in 'meteors, and other luminous phœnomena; because 'there are fresh supplies of elastic vapours continually 'ascending, to make good the waste occasioned by these 'decompositions. But it may be urged, that the case with 'the decomposition of the elastic fluids in the solar 'atmosphere would be very different, since light is 'emitted and does not return to the sun, as clouds do to 'the earth, when they descend in showers of rain. 'To which I answer, that in the decomposition of phos- 'phoric fluids, every other ingredient but light may al- 'so *return to the body of the sun:* and that the emission 'of light must waste the sun, is not a difficulty that can 'be opposed to our hypothesis. For, as it is an evident 'fact that the *sun does emit light*, the same objection, if 'it could be one, would equally militate against every 'other assignable way to account for the phænomenon.' Dr Herschel then goes on to mention various considera- tions that may lessen the pressure of this alleged difficul-

ty,

ty, suggesting also that there may be ways of restoring what is lost by the emission of light, although the manner in which this compensation is made should not appear to us; and on the whole he observes that 'the *sun* viewed 'in this light appears to be nothing else than a very *emi-* 'nent, *large*, and *lucid planet*, evidently the first, or, 'in strictness of speaking, the only primary one of our 'system, all others being truly secondary to it: and its 'substance exists in the manner of lucid clouds swim- 'ming in a transparent atmosphere;' which seems to illustrate Mr Skinner's idea of the sun being a *lamp* or *luminary*, that is, a vessel for receiving light, and sending that light forth, through the medium of its atmosphere, to the whole of created nature.

From a correspondence so interesting to the friends of truth and legitimate science, as that of which a small specimen has now been given, let the reader be invited to pass to the perusal of a few letters on subjects no less edifying and important, and which gave the writer an opportunity of mingling the sentiments of a sound divine with all the anxious tenderness of an affectionate progenitor. Mr Skinner's eldest Grandson, after having been regularly educated, under his father's eye, at the Grammar School and Marischal College of Aberdeen, and after having studied, under his venerable grandfather, the original language of revelation, was admitted to holy orders, in the month of February, 1790; on which occasion he received the following letter from his grandfather, dated March the 4th, 1790, and prefaced by these pathetic lines;—

Chare nec immerito mihi nuper prime *Nepotum*,
Nunc sacro *Fratris* nomine chare mihi;
Accipe, sed facilis, calami pia vota senilis,
Pectoris ex antro quæ tibi fundit *Arus*.

'Your ultimum laicale I received in course, and now 'sit down with a satisfaction, which, as yet, you can 'have no idea of, but which, I hope you shall live to 'feel, to congratulate you on the *sacred* increase of our 'connexion, and to wish you all the *assistance* necessa-'ry for insuring success, and all the success suitable to 'that assistance, in the important *vocation* you are now 'fixed to for life. I am fully sensible of the little need 'you have of any thing like instruction from any quarter 'other than the one you have long been acquainted 'with. But as 'abundantia legis non frangit legem;' 'and as any thing from me cannot be called altogether 'extraneous, I know you will kindly accept the effu-'sions, *qualescunque*, of a heart, which will only yield 'to other two in concern for your well-being. I shall 'not hurt your feelings in supposing any the least neces-'sity of putting you in mind of the great *weight* of the 'business you have engaged in: I shall only take the 'freedom to hint at some things which, from long ex-'perience, and from personal comparison, I may be led 'to think, in your particular case, either advantages, or 'disadvantages, on your first entrance to the office in 'general, and shall leave the improvement of such hints 'to your own prudence.

'As to the advantages, you know you have been 'from the cradle under a ministerial eye, and as it 'were, habituated insensibly, but progressively, to that 'profession, so as to see it in all the colours, favou-

'rable

'rable or not, in which it could appear, and have been 'thereby led, by the sanctification of grace upon the 'habits of nature, to adopt it as your future mode of 'life. I call this an advantage, of which many, and I for 'one, had not the opportunity: And though I know, 'from the experience of my own family, that all, who 'have had such opportunity, do not embrace it as you 'have done, yet where and when a superior direction 'turns the choice that way, it will be no mean in-'strument in the hand of that direction to operate with. 'Besides, from what I find of the talents you are in 'possession of, it appears to me, that you are not only 'fitted for, but even originally designed to, this par-'ticular work. I will not be so unthankful to the 'great Giver, nor pretend to such a hypocritical mo-'desty, as to say any thing in diminution of what ta-'lents have been bestowed upon myself. But while I 'observe to you, and I hope, without imputation of 'vanity, that I have talents superior to yours in some 'articles of what is called learned science, which, instead 'of being serviceable in my present station, have rather 'been inconvenient, by engaging my thoughts many 'times in useless speculations, I do assure you, and I 'do it without flattery, that in what principally regards 'the ministry, you have much the ascendant over what 'I remember myself, at my first outset, which was much 'about your age. You are better acquainted with the 'Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, both as to 'their matter and style, and even with the early Fathers, 'than I *then* was; and any preference you may be 'pleased to see in my knowledge of these subjects *now*, 'is (humanly speaking) altogether owing to a long

'course

'course of study, and a persevering application of the 'talent which, I found, I had for the dead languages, and 'which, if I am not much mistaken, you also possess as 'much as ever I did. You have also the advantage of 'me in the article of elocution, by being endowed with 'a more musical voice than I could ever boast of, which, 'though perhaps more magnified now-a-days than it 'ought to be, is certainly a great beautifier of sacred 'offices, where it is natural, and kept within proper 'bounds. These, and some other things of less im-'portance, which I need not mention, are advantages on 'your side to facilitate your progress in the way of offi-'cial duty; and I hope you will use them to that lau-'dable purpose.

'On the other hand, there are some particularities in 'your case, which were not in mine; two especially, 'which may be a little disadvantageous, at least for a 'while, on your now stepping forward into something 'like public life. One is, that this is your first step of 'that kind. You have hitherto been all along under 'direction, scarce ever left to your own management, 'but led by motives of duty and affection to look up 'to, and depend upon, others for advice and assistance 'on every occasion that called for such friendly aid. 'Such having been the lot of your early years, you can-'not be thought to be much acquainted with mankind 'in general, and must be at a loss for some time how 'to accommodate yourself properly to the different 'humours you may have to deal with, so as neither to 'lose sight of common prudence, nor of ministerial 'character: The humours of parents or of family con-

'nec-

'nections afford no adequate standard for the regulation 'of conduct, when the natural principles of love or 'fear may bias the judgment, or check it from exerting 'its own powers. So it will require time and attention 'to enable you to become your own master, which 'hitherto you have not been, and to know as much 'of the world as may shew you how to act consistently 'in it, of which you have hardly had any trials previous 'to what will now be expected from you. And this 'leads me to another remark on your case, pointing to 'what, I think, is no advantage to a young man, that 'you enter the world in your sacred character, under a 'weight of great expectations, greater perhaps than there 'is any just ground for forming; and it will cost you 'the utmost care and vigilance in every part of beha-'viour, if not to answer these expectations to the full, 'yet so as not to disappoint them altogether. Both 'these are circumstances in your case, from which mine 'was exempted, since, young as I was, when invested 'with the sacred character, I had yet been called to 'struggle through various difficult scenes, left entirely 'to my own management, and since I entered upon the 'ecclesiastical theatre, unknown and unheard of, with 'prejudices perhaps against me, but certainly with no 'prepossessions in my favour. I had, therefore, on the 'whole, the fewer difficulties to encounter, as it is easier 'to overcome groundless prejudices, than fully to an-'swer high expectations. Yet these are inconveniencies, 'if they be really such, which will be felt only at the 'first outset; and you will find, that with the assistance 'which you can have, at no great distance, from that 'guide, who, under your heavenly FATHER, has the

'next

'next title in you, a little time and prudent circumspec-
'tion will turn these appearances of discouragement into
'a proportionable addition of satisfaction and comfort.
'All this I have said in general, without any view to the
'particular charge you are designed for, to the circum-
'stances of which I am as yet an entire stranger, and
'therefore can only pray, that the GREAT BISHOP may
'assist, fortify, and accept you. To his strengthening
'grace, and blessed protection, I most heartily recom-
'mend you, and with particular pleasure subscribe my-
'self

'Your affectionate, &c.

'And fellow labourer in Christ, &c.'

After writing this friendly and affectionate letter, it was not long before Mr Skinner was better acquainted with the particular situation of his grandson's charge, which happened to lie in a place abounding at that time with those nominal Christians, who choose to distinguish themselves by the singular title of *Unitarians*. From the absurdity of their principles, there seemed to be little danger of an Episcopal congregation being swayed or affected by them. Yet at the desire of his young friend, anxious for the safety of his "little "flock," and earnestly wishing to see them preserved from the "ravening wolves" that come in "sheep's "clothing," Mr Skinner drew up a short preservative against the Unitarian errors, in the form of a dialogue between "an Unitarian, and a Trinitarian;" the substance of which instructive little tract has been diffused through such of the "Letters addressed to Candidates for Holy Orders," contained in this volume, as serve

to

to point out what christians are to believe concerning the adorable THREE in JEHOVAH, and confirm them in a steady profession of this fundamental doctrine of their holy faith.

Some years after the writing of this little tract, the young man, at whose request it had been drawn up, was removed to a congregation exposed to the danger of imbibing those deistical tenets which, as a cover for the democratic, and levelling principles, that were combined with them, had been artfully disseminated by Paine and his disciples, assisted by republican infidels in all parts of the kingdom, but most successfully in some of the small manufacturing towns in the county of Forfar. On this subject Mr Skinner wrote the following letter to his grandson, of date January 12th, 1799:

'I truly feel, both from what you told me in person, 'and from what your father writes me, for your situation 'among people, many of whom are already so perverse 'in principle, as gives too much cause to fear that they 'will grow more and more corrupted, if no effectual 'method can be devised for bringing them to a sounder, 'better way of thinking. You seem to be of opinion, 'that if we could so far satisfy them, as "to get *reason* "properly *defined*, *its nature*, *its powers*, *its province* "*fairly illustrated*," all would be well. Now pardon 'your old grandfather for saying, that this is a *needless* 'proposal; needless, because impracticable. Reason, I 'take to be, in man, what instinct is in brutes, both of 'them felt, and acted by, but both belonging to the 'class which the philosophers of nature call *nondescripts*. 'The subterfuge, to which your antagonists fly off—

" Against reason, therefore against fact and common " sense," has neither truth nor solidity in it. Tell a ' philosopher of the torrid zone (there may be *illumi-* ' *nati* even there) that you have seen water, even the sea, ' bearing an immense weight of solid matter upon its sur- ' face, men and animals walking as securely upon it as ' on the dry land, he would immediately cry out, " im- ' possible, because against reason and common sense :" ' and this he might do with the same strength of argu- ' ment that the philosophers of F——— can produce ' against the most objectionable parts of Scripture. The ' trite phrase, therefore, of " the reason and common " sense of mankind" gives but a vague sound, and the " dernier resort" to it is a mere fallacy at best. It is ' not your business to define " reason." Let your ad- ' versary give the definition, who relies wholly on it. ' Your weapon is " revelation," which you can produce ' and lay on the table. Ask the Infidel Club what they ' mean by " reason ?" " It is incumbent upon you, gen- " tlemen, who are the challengers, to let me know with " what arms you intend to combat, and not pretend to " fight me with an " Ælia, Lælia, Crispis," which you " can wield and thrust with as you please. Here is my " weapon ; take it into your hands, and examine its " edge ; do me the same justice with yours ; let me see " it and try it." These, one should think, are necessary " preliminaries, and what, I presume, the gentlemen of " honour" require. What ! you will say, object against " reason !" I shall be called an " unreasonable fool." ' Be it so : This is scolding, not arguing ; and could ' easily be balanced with " irreligious wretch." I have ' long observed, that the champions of revelation are by

' far

'far too generous to their adversaries, who, like their 'French teachers, know not what generosity is. You 'make concessions, trusting to the intrinsic merits of 'your cause; and what is the result? These concessions 'they lay hold of, and retort upon you, without conceding 'any thing from their own side. But try them, at the 'first outset, with such little questions as I have hinted, 'and you will find them not a little nonplussed. I 'once confounded a would-be-deist, by putting the "previous question" to him—"Who are you? as I "do not chuse to enter the lists with one I know no-"thing about."—"What! he said, "do you not know "me, your intimate acquaintance, such a man, and "such a man's son, &c.?" "But how are you sure of "*that?* have you any proof but revelation for this, any "evidence but your mother's word? and have not I "as good evidence, to the full, for the Bible being what "I believe it to be, as you have for believing yourself "to be the son of such a man, &c.?" I do not say that 'this convinced him; but it staggered him; though a 'subsequent accumulation of wealth threw him into the 'fashionable phrenzy, by which, I am sorry to hear, he 'is daily losing that "*reason*" which is so much boasted 'of by all his party. Still it remains to ask them what 'is "reason," and it lies on them to answer the ques-'tion, and tell you plainly what they mean by it. 'They will call it "*a directing power.*" I would call 'it *a subservient faculty.*" These, it will be said, are 'but metaphysical quibbles: And let me ask, from 'what side they have been introduced? We all feel 'something within us which our language calls "*reason,*" '(I do not know a Hebrew word for it) and why may

'not I put *my* quibble upon it, as well as Pope Voltaire 'put *his?* Their "reason" startles at the Bible in 'general; my reason finds nothing amiss in any *particular* part of it. Here is a variety of *reason*, as I 'am confident I have thousands on my side; so what 'becomes of the "reason of mankind?" You will 'be sensible by this time, what a handle many of these "soi disant" philosophers have made of many of our 'current phrases and notions; such as, "light of na-"ture—God's *moral* government—the eternal laws of "good and evil," and the like, and how they have been 'turned to the prejudice of revelation, which yet gives 'no countenance to them, and ought not to be entangled 'with them. Lay aside these *philosophemata*, as we may 'call them, and it will be seen, that revelation needs no "vindication," but only to be viewed in her own native 'beauty, without any of these harlot fripperies thus for-'ced upon her. But the misfortune is, that instead of 'taking revelation to be the original instructor of what 'we call reason, we set up reason to be the judge of reve-'lation, and would be trying the merits of "*divine* truth" 'by a variegated and varying standard of *human* devising. 'Is this fair—is it logical—is it even *reasonable?* Let 'the slaves of reason bully ever so much, they can, in 'fact, make no more of it, but only "*a capability of being* "*taught.*" The reason of brutes, which in them is cal-'led *instinct*, is indeed a teacher, and an early one; but 'is it so in man? Let the following fact decide: Suppose 'a score of ewes in one cot, and in one night to bring 'forth their young—every lamb shall immediately know 'its own mother, and every ewe her own lamb. Would 'it be so with a similar number of pregnant females of

'the

'the human race? Certainly not. Where, then, is our 'boasted reason, and when does its mighty power begin 'to appear? This is another circumstance which should 'be attended to; and I think old Tertullian's criterion not 'a bad one, who dates the first dawning of reason from 'the first dawning of "shame." We should observe 'the great diversity of this talent, so confessedly general 'in the species, but so visibly different in the individuals. 'All these considerations satisfy me in my definition of "reason" to be a "teachable faculty," not "*an indepen-*"*dent teacher*;" and in this opinion I am warranted by 'the acknowledgment of these patrons of infidelity them-'selves. In the European Magazine for October 1793, '(p. 246.) I find a quotation from one of them, a Mer-'cier, to this purpose: "When we have been once *in-*"*structed* by experience, we are no longer permitted to "*dream* with philosophy. It is not in our power to cre-"ate a nation of well informed men; and among the "multitude of citizens, there will always be found a nu-"merous class irrecoverably condemned to ignorance, "the mother of all vices and all crimes. There is "therefore but one single way to *teach* duties to those "who are precluded from better *information*: Such "were the principles of Zoroaster, Numa, Minos, &c." 'It will be no immodest question, I hope, to ask, why 'Moses may not be admitted such an instructor, as 'well as Zoroaster, who, there is ground to think, bor-'rowed all that is valuable in his doctrine from Moses? 'And, to come down to our own times, why may not 'a Horne, or a Horsley, for instance, be as well quali-'fied to teach Mercier's "numerous class of ignorants" 'as a Voltaire, or a Volney? Is it not a glaring piece of

'va-

'vanity in these fellows to set themselves up for the only 'illuminati or illuminators of mankind with the fantasti-'cal ravings of their own brain, which seems to have 'plenty of the "dura" but little of the "pia mater" 'in it, and thus arrogantly to claim the exclusive enjoy-'ment of a faculty, which we possess in common with 'them, but do not idolize as they do? Could the 'friends of revelation allow themselves to put on the 'same airs of effrontery as its enemies do, it would be 'but meeting them on their own ground, and fighting 'them with their own weapons. But our cause stands 'in no need of such silly swaggering; though were it 'only victory that we aimed at, I have no doubt but im-'pudence like theirs would be the readiest way to obtain 'it, as it does not appear that modest and fair *reasoning* 'ever will. However you must take them as you find 'them, and be content with your lot, though it should 'be similar to that of the zealous St Paul, when he "fought with beasts at Ephesus," endeavouring, to 'the utmost of your power, to defend the "Truth" not 'against *reason* (that is our glory) but against the sugges-'tions of *Satan*, against the licentious passions of *flesh*, 'and against the prevailing infection of the *world*, the "Executive Directory" of the infernal republic. The 'hints I have now given, I do not propose as instruction, 'but only as a proof of my readiness to join, as in duty 'bound, in the common warfare, and like *old* Priam, 'to throw my "telum imbelle," though it should be "sine ictu," a humble testimony of my feeble aid, and "valeat quantum valere potest."

In the year 1797 a very strange, insidious publication ap-

peared, under the title of "Considerations on the Doc-"trines of a future state, and the resurrection, as reveal-"ed, or supposed to be so in the Scriptures," &c. by Richard Amner. Bishop Skinner at Aberdeen was early apprized of this mischievous work, and requested by some of his correspondents in England to get his father to give a proper account of it in the "*Antijacobin Review.*" "Zealously affected always in a good cause," Mr Skinner was easily prevailed on to engage in the pious undertaking, and addressed two letters to Richard Amner, under the signature of "*a Caledonian Curate;*" which, being thought of too great length for the ordinary periodical Reviews, were, by the Editor of the Anti-jacobin, published in a volume which he called "The Spirit of "Anti-jacobinism for 1802," and the author of them received the thanks of those who employed him, for what they justly termed "a spirited Vindication of one of "the most essential Articles of our Christian Creed."

Bishop Skinner's youngest son, having gone through the usual course of education at Aberdeen, went to England in the beginning of the year 1798, to complete his studies in the University of Oxford. Being informed, on his arrival there, that the "Virtues of the Magnet" was given out as the subject of the prize poem for that year, he wished to see what his old grandfather, then in the 77th year of his age, could produce on that curious subject, and having communicated his request in writing, he received, almost in course of post, the beautiful Latin poem—"Ad Magnetem Εγκωμιαστικον," which, introduced by some Latin lines addressed to himself, will be found in the third volume of this work. Having spent the sum-

summer vacation at home, he returned to Oxford in autumn, and did not fail to send his grandfather a particular account of the manner in which his time was employed, and of the authors which he was reading, requesting to have his opinion of the course of study in which he was now engaged, and of various other matters connected with it. In return, he was favoured with the following letter, which is here presented to the reader, as a specimen of Mr Skinner's easy way of writing, and the free, unrestrained manner in which he delivered his sentiments on every literary subject proposed to him.

Linshart, Nov. 23, 1798.

'Quas mihi scripsisti dilecte Nepos, Gulielme,
'Accepi solito cordis amore Tuas—and am happy
'to hear of your being again safe and snug at *Wadham*,
'after the rough weather you had to encounter by the
'way. I did not at all relish your meddling with Nep-
'tune, who, in our Scotch phrase, is not always "to
"ride the water on." Mariners think nothing of such
"stormy blasts," but raw students shudder at them.
'By this time, however, the gale will be forgot, and
'you are now making yourself intimate with that old
'fabulous witch Medea, whom I know nothing of but
'from my friend Ovid. Euripedes is none of my ac-
'quaintance, having never seen the gentleman, so, like
'many of my calling, I can say nothing about him,
'though I have heard a good deal of him. Of the other
'author whom you have now in hand, Demosthenes, I
'have some little knowledge, but not enough to enable
'me to speak properly of him. Yet with all these, and
'many more such defects, which I am not ashamed to

'ac-

'acknowledge, I have struggled on through a long pro-
'fessional course, and would still, either for amusement,
'or instruction, prefer an old Psalm, or a chapter of
'Job, to all the celebrated compositions of far later anti-
'quity. You will see by this plain confession, how un-
'fit I am to gratify the wish you express for my "advice
"with respect to your studies;" led away, as I have long
'been, by old-fashioned notions, and unable to compre-
'hend the latitude of the modern plans of education.—
'There is besides a very important preliminary to be ad-
'justed, as to the particular object in view, to which
'your studies are pointing. These old *celeberrimi Græ-*
'*corum* may be of use for the stage or the bar. But if
'your views be accordant with my wishes, and your fa-
'ther's hopes, it is a question how far the dramatic beau-
'ties of Euripides, or the oratorial flights of Demosthenes
'can assist in explaining some of the *uranian* peculiari-
'ties of a Paul, or a John. Try them, for instance,
'with St. John's αμην αμην, λεγω 'υμιν, or his την αρχην 'οτι
'λαλω 'υμιν (chap. viii. 25, &c.) or with St. Paul's σωμα
'πνευματικον (1 Cor. xv. 44) or his αρρητα ρηματα (2 Cor.
'xii. 4. &c.) If their style can be of use in illustrating
'such passages as these, it may be studied with that view;
'but their subject is surely far inferior to what we are
'concerned with. However, as you have some spare
'time yet to throw away, it may be fully as well employ-
'ed in looking at these beautiful trifles, as in the pursuit
'of certain University enjoyments, which, I hear, are
'proverbial, but am persuaded, will never have any
'temptations for you. Your other branch of learning I
'highly approve of, as you know, the Hebrew has been
'long my favourite study. The task assigned you in ex-

'plaining the first chapter of the first book of Samuel 'you will find a very easy one, as indeed all the historical parts of scripture are. Yet even here there are 'some things worthy of a critical investigation, as (in 'verse 3) why the title "Lord of Hosts" is now mentioned for the first time, if the title conveys the commonly received idea of "universal dominion;" and 'again, (verse 20) whether the name *Samuel* in Hebrew 'warrants the interpretation on the margin of some of 'our bibles, to which the reason given by Hannah, in 'her language at least, gives no countenance. These, 'and such like minutiæ may escape the grammar school-'boy: but the theological student, (I hope I am writing 'to one) will observe, and make use of them. Otherwise it may be asked, "Cui bono?" You tell me, that 'the worthy Mr. Stevens, (to whom supra omnes you 'seem to be obliged) has, inter alia, presented you with 'a manuscript by Mr. Jones, recommending the study 'of the Hebrew, "particularly in the way of *etymology*." 'This account I am *particularly* pleased with; and my 'reason is, that in the life of Bishop Horne, I find Mr. 'Jones representing that great man, as a despiser of, if 'not hostile to, Etymology, on account of the disputes 'on that subject between Archdeacon Sharp and the 'learned Julius Bate, whose name, I am sorry to see, the 'Biographer has never mentioned. One thing I can say 'from personal knowledge, as I had been ten years in the 'ministry when Mr. Horne first appeared on the literary 'theatre, that his great fabric of fame was begun upon 'the etymological foundation which Mr. Hutchinson had 'laid; and I have in my possession some strictures of his 'in that strain, on a small Tract which I wrote, as far

'back

'back as the year 1753, upon the SHECHINAH, and
'which was submitted some years after to the inspection
'of Messrs. Horne and Holloway. I am therefore not
'singular in my attachment to Hebrew Etymology, with-
'out which we must lose many of those delightful beau-
'ties, which the sacred language of the first revelation
'presents to us. This, among many other proofs, might
'be exemplified in that capital word ALEIM, which in-
'volves the whole plan of our redemption, but which the
'Masoretic Pointers, by reading it ELOHIM, and boldly
'inserting the passive VAU into the middle of it, to
'force that reading, would reduce to a mere empty
'sound without any sense. Your father writes me, that
'you will probably spend some of the Christmas holidays
'with our good friend Mr. Boucher, at Epsom. If so,
'you may, at your leisure hours, look into my manu-
'script, now in his custody, on the "Song of Solomon,"
'where you will meet with a good deal of Etymological
'Illustration, some of which will, no doubt, be thought
'fanciful, and far fetched. But epithets are not argu-
'ments. It will be acknowledged, I hope, that the Di-
'vine Spirit who formed the original language, or at
'least taught his penmen how to use it, would fix a mea-
'ning to every word, and not leave any of them vague
'or undetermined. And how is that meaning to be dis-
'covered, but by carefully attending to the structure of
'the language, a neglect of which has been the means
'of undermining revelation in several of its fundamental
'points, as is visibly, I shall not say designedly, the case
'with respect to יהוה, אלהים, ברית, and some other
'important words that I could name? At present you
'must put up with the explanations given by those, who

'have the direction of your studies, and will sometimes 'be obliged to adopt a sense contrary to your own judg- 'ment. But—be not discouraged; you are not to be 'always under these trammels; and it is only when you 'come to be your own master, and are at liberty to 'search and examine for yourself, that you can expect 'to attain a competent knowledge of the first and most 'expressive of all languages. There are three points to 'be chiefly noticed in the study of the Hebrew, the '*Grammar*, the *Syntax*, and the *Idiom*. In the gram- 'mar, the verb is the principal object, and more atten- 'tion, I think, should be paid to the *Hiphil* than is com- 'monly done. The syntax is quite plain, like that of 'our own language, and when followed in its own easy 'way, would sometimes point out things to us, which 'translators, to make it read the better, keep out of 'sight. But the *idiom* is the acmé of the whole; and 'this can be learned only from the Bible itself, as there 'are no other Hebrew writings extant with which to form 'a comparison. This must be a work of time, and may 'be much facilitated by concordances, especially by that 'of Marius Calasio, who has been my instructor, that 'is, who has assisted me to instruct myself; and if my at- 'tempt on the "Song of Solomon" deserves what Mr. 'Boucher perhaps too highly says of it, that "it clearly "gives a fairer and better view of that extraordinary "book, than any version that he knows of," let Marius 'Calasio have the praise. But what I am now recom- 'mending must be the employment of years to come, 'when your attendance at Wadham is over, and you are 'left to your own management. By the bye, I have 'heard, that the celebrated Dr. Kennicot was scholar of

'Wadham

'Wadham College, as you are, and upon the same footing, the liberality of beneficent friends. Yet were I to wish for celebrity to you, it would not be in the way by which he acquired it; and to which all the applause in the world would never reconcile me. The integrity of the Hebrew text, as we have it, is a subject too sacred to be lightly handled, and it is a matter of doubt with me whether such handling be designed for, or productive of, ill or good. The *ill* I *fear*, and the *good* I have *not yet seen* or *heard of*. When Dr. Kennicot was so full of his interpolations, and various readings, I wonder he did not try his hand on a passage in our Hebrew text, the proving which to be an interpolation, by producing two or three foreign manuscripts without it, would have done more to disparage revelation, and overturn the whole plan and purpose of christianity, than all the trifling objections to words here and there, which have been so pompously brought forward. The passage, to which I allude, is neither more nor less than the whole third chapter of Genesis, which, as having very little appearance of connexion with what goes before and follows, might be rationally set aside as an interpolation by the Critic of taste, on the footing of its being an impertinent breaking in upon the historian's design of accounting for the original peopling of the earth; a design worthy of the historian, and which, without this abrupt and needless interruption, would, by joining the last verse of the second with the first of the fourth chapter, have proceeded in a manner quite smooth and *natural*. It is on the same footing of incoherence, that attempts have been made to expunge, from the canonical roll of the Old Testament, the "Song of

"So-

" Solomon," and from that of the New, the famous se-
' venth verse of the fifth chapter of St. John's First
' Epistle, which has been such an eye-sore to those who
' cannot see with patience any proof of a Trinity in the
' Godhead. What I have now mentioned will shew you
' the necessity of reading with caution, as well as with as-
' siduity. By doing both you will acquire a capacity to
' separate the chaff from the corn, to lay up the one,
' and let the other go with the wind. I will tell you my
' method, since ever I understood any thing about books.
' When visiting any neighbour possessed of such a lib-
' rary as country gentlemen might be supposed to have,
' I took down in writing what I thought worthy of no-
' tice, in any book that came in my way, and collecting
' the most material of these various extracts into a com-
' mon place book, I could have recourse to it, as often as
' I found occasion for such a reference. You know the
' extent of my library—contained, as it is, in a closet of
' *about five feet square.* Yet, I believe, I may say with-
' out vanity, that there are few who have published so
' much—(whether valuable or not is out of the question)
' with so few books in their possession. My common-
' place books, through fifty-seven years, and the blessing
' of a most tenacious memory, have been my storehouse,
' and from their contents I have done what, once on a
' day, I could never have expected to do. I shall only
' hint at another part of my literary practice, without tak-
' ing upon me to recommend it to others.—When I sat
' down to the perusal of any book of character, whether
' justly esteemed or not, I first went over it with a glance
' of my eye, with as much dispatch as possible, and when
' I had thus found out the author's main design, I then
' pro-

'proceeded at leisure to examine the execution of it, so 'as to see whether the object in view was fairly accom- 'plished. I had observed, that in books, especially of 'the argumentative cast, it is not uncommon for things to 'occur early in the work, which the deliberate reader 'may stumble at, but which, on a farther perusal, may 'appear in another light. My method therefore I have 'found of use to prevent that inconvenience. In a word, 'there is an art, or (as our King James said of preach- 'ing) a "*knack*" in reading; and reading without art, 'is like eating without appetite, where a great deal may 'be swallowed, if not to hurt, yet to no profit. Thus 'having hammered out matter for my paper, and sooner 'than I expected—I shall only say,

'Hæc *citò* scripsit Avus dilecto grata Nepoti:
'Quicquid dictat amor, dulce *citoque* fluit.'—

In this Letter to his Grandson, the reader will have noticed a reference to what the writer calls his "Attempt "on the Song of Solomon;" an undertaking in which many of Mr. Skinner's leisure hours had been delightfully employed for several years, and which, after various interruptions, he was enabled to accomplish in compliance with the wishes of those his literary friends, who had long been anxious to see such a pious work brought to a happy conclusion. Having become acquainted with the learned Dr. Doig, master of the Grammar School at Stirling,* and

* In the preceding correspondence between Mr. Skinner and Dr. Gleig, some notice has been taken of the talents of this excellent linguist Dr. Doig, who wrote the Article on *Philology*, as well as those on *Mysteries* and *Mythology*, for the Encyclopædia Britannica, and was also the author of two very ingenious "Letters on the Savage State, addressed to Lord "Kames."

and communicated to him in a Latin letter, his intention of continuing the labours which he had for some time bestowed

" Kames." The biographer of Lord Kames gives the following account of the manner, in which his Lordship became acquainted with the author of these Letters.—" They were written without the most distant view to " publication; and the first of them, dated from Stirling, but without the " subscription of the writer, being transmitted to Lord Kames, who was " then passing the Christmas vacation at Blair Drummond, his curiosity " was roused to discover the author of a composition, which bore evidence " of a most uncommon degree of learning and ingenuity. In conversing " on the subject with an intimate friend, Dr. Graham Moir of Leckie, a " gentleman of taste and erudition, and of great scientific knowledge, who " frequently visited him in the country, his Lordship producing the letter " of his anonymous correspondent—' In the name of wonder,' said he, ' Doctor, what prodigy of learning have you got in the town of Stirling, ' who is capable of writing this Letter, which I received a few days ago?' " The Doctor, after glancing over a few pages, answered—' I think I ' know him. There is but one man who is able to write this letter, and a ' most extraordinary man he is, David Doig, the master of our Grammar ' School.'—' What!' said Lord Kames, ' a genius of this kind, within a ' few miles of my house, and I never to have heard of him! And a fine ' fellow too; he tells his mind roundly and plainly: I love him for ' that: He does not spare me; I respect him the more. You must make ' us acquainted, my good Doctor. I will write him a card, and to-mor- ' row, if you please, you shall bring him to dine with me.' " The inter- " view took place accordingly, and to the mutual satisfaction of the parties. " The subject of their controversy was freely and amply discussed; and " though neither could boast of making a convert of his antagonist, a cor- " dial friendship took place from that day, and a literary correspondence " began, which suffered no interruption during their joint lives. Dr. " Doig died in March 1800, at the age of 81. Besides his great erudi- " tion, the elegance of his taste was shewn in his favourite amusement, the " composition of many small poetical pieces, both in English and Latin.— " Those of an epigrammatic turn, are peculiarly excellent. The follow- " ing elegiac stanzas, written by him on his own life and studies, and " which were engraven on a marble monument, erected to his memory at " the expence of the community of Stirling, would have done honour to " the pen of a Markham, a Vincent Bourne, or even a Buchanan.

" Edidici

stowed on the "Song of Songs," with a view of exhibiting that beautiful composition in a clear, consistent, and truly christian light, he received in return a Letter, written also in Latin; and this gave occasion to some farther correspondence, in which, as the subject of the "Song of "Solomon" is frequently referred to, it is presumed, that the learned reader will not be displeased at having the several letters laid before him. The first from Dr. Doig, is as follows :—

Dabam Sterlini xvi. Kal. Oct. 1794.

'Literæ tuæ, vir admodum reverende, itinere solito 'jampridem ad me pervenerunt. Quam jucundæ fuerint, 'si conarer explicare, me tibi blandire, vel potius adulari, 'forsitan existimares. Hoc unum verissime asseverare 'possum, me eas quotidie mecum gestare, et subinde, 'data occasione, lectitare. Quamobrem tibi non maturius rescripserim, causas cum solicite anquiro, nullas reperire possum, quas veras dicere ausim, sed fortasse veris, aliqua ex parte, similes. Nunc negotiis aliquot literariis, qualiacunque ea fuerint, obstrictus, nunc rebus familiaribus distractus, nunc quotidiano scholæ labore

"Edidici quædam, perlegi plura, notavi
"Paucula, cum domino mox peritura suo,
"Lubrica Pieriæ tentarem præmia palmæ
"Credulus, ingenio heu nimis alta meo!
"Extincto famam ruituro crescere saxo,
"Posse putem, vivo quæ mihi nulla fuit!"

For these, and other particulars of the life of this wonderful man, see that elegant and entertaining work, "The Life of Lord Kames, by the "Hon. Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee," Vol. II. p. 160, &c.

'bore defessus,—sæpius IGNAVIA, rerumque omnium 'tædio quasi consopitus, ad negotium indies differendum 'adactus sum; cum interim animo persuasum esset ad- 'modum inurbane, ne dicam injuste, hac in parte me 'præstare. Verum excusatiunculis nihil profuturis cum 'etiam necessariæ amissis, ad rem ipsam pergere aggre- 'dior. Quod versiculos meos in *Buchananum* probas, me 'gaudere fateor. Virum illum ut Poetam amplector, ut 'Historicum improbo, et repudio. Partibus Moravianis 'addictus, quid dixit, aut quid tacuit; etiam alibi negli- 'gens, et veritatis parum studiosus, in Mariam Reginam 'illam omnium infelicissimam, errorum aliquot, eorum- 'que leviorum consciam, fœdissime, simulque ingratissi- 'me invectus multo turpius sibi dedecus, quam illi infa- 'miam inussit. Hæc illi tractu temporis eluetur, illud ei 'perpetuo adhærebit.

'Versionem tuam Psalmi viii. maxima cum voluptate 'perlegi. Versuum suavitate, sententiarum sublimitate, 'metri concinnitate, latinitatis elegantia, impetu illo poeti- 'co, qui totum Psalmum pervadit, magnopere sum de- 'lectatus. *Impetu*, inquam, *illo poetico*, quo omnes 'æquales meos, quorum carmina ad me pervenerint, 'longe longeque mihi videris superare. Psalmi tui xlv. 'quanto excelsius argumentum, tanto magis apparet vis 'illa poetica, qua tantum non omnes superas. Epigram- 'ma tuum Latinitate, ingeniique acumine laudibus meis 'superius judico, sicut et alia tua complura, quæ a fra- 'tre tuo, amicoque meo doctissimo, Domino Gleig, aliis- 'que aut perlegi, aut recitari audivi. Canticum tuum '*Tullochgoriense* mihi adeo arridet, ut opuscula mea 'universa unico illo carmine libenter velim permuta-

're.

're.* Ut tamen beneficio tuo gratiam, aliqua ex parte, 'referam, versiculos aliquot seniles, ipse senex, libenter 'exarabo—

Fortunæ Mediocritas.

'Felix qui modico Superorum munere dives
'Nec nimis alta cupit, nec meliora fugit;
'Qui sapiens meritos, animo, non spernit honores,
'Nec stolidus nimio laudis amore tumet;
'Nec timet obscuri probra, et convicia vulgi,
'Neu Regum tumidas horret adire minas;
'Qui neque pauperiem probro sibi ducit acerbam,
'Neu nimis immodicas fœnore quærit opes;
'Cui neque fortunæ turgescunt vela secunda,
'Nec gemit adverso flamine quassa ratis;
'Purus, ut obscurus errans in vallibus, undas
'In mare pacato flumine Rivus agit,
'Quas neque congestæ moles, neque saxa morantur
'Nec rapido fervens gurgite turbat hiems;
'Ille per ambages vitæ, salebrasque malorum
'Ignotum innocuo cum grege carpit iter;
'Et cum summa dies, et ineluctabile Fati
'Tempus adest placido funere liber abit.

'Cætera desiderantur.'

'Qua ratione, quove magistro, quibus libris perlectis, 'linguam sacram edidicerim, rogas. Ego sane didici, 'sed nunquam edidici. Senex admodum manum ser- 'moni illi admovi, coactis quibuscunque poteram adju- 'mentis, iisque fortasse non optimis. Apiculis Masore- 'ticis infestus sum, quippe quæ mihi adversantur: per 'annum unum et alterum, eó animum in endi, sed in 'studio multa mihi adversa fuere, oculorum dolor ferme 'continuus, temporis exiguitas, rerum aliarum occupa-

 'tiones,

* The two Latin Psalms will be found at the end of the *Second*, and the other pieces here referred to, in the *Third* Volume.

'tiones, multaque præterea quæ longum esset enumera-
're. Unum profuit, usus nempe, et quasi innata lingua-
'rum parandarum facilitas: Unum obstabat, quod interea
'linguæ Arabicæ, et Persicæ aliquantum operæ impen-
'debam.

'Te *Cantico Canticorum* explicando vacare prorsus
'miror. Mihi quidem carmen illud nihil aliud quam
'BUCOLICUM orientale videtur esse, vixque libris sacris
'annumerandum. Ego studiis theologicis pusillum tem-
'poris, olim impendi; hisce tamen disciplinis manum
'jamdudum subduxi, neque de quæstionibus theologicis
'libens disceptarem. Tu perge,—opus inchoatum gna-
'viter exige; eoque magis insto atque urgeo, quod lin-
'guæ Hebraicæ jam diu assuefactus es, quo magis potes,
'pollesque.

'Stricturas tuas (quas vocant) in Philologiam meam
'æqui bonique consulo. Urbanæ sunt—candidæ sunt,
'ingenuæ sunt admodum. Alias accipio, alias pari urba-
'nitate ac ablatæ sunt, non improbo, minus tantummodo
'probo. Quod si, numine divino favente, occasio collo-
'quendi coram data fuerit, hæc, et mille alia inter nos
'placide et fortasse comiter jactaremus. Ego quoque jam
'ætate provectior sum, quippe 74 annos natus, sed "cruda
'mihi, viridisque senectus"—Virgil, Æn. vi. Si quid
'habes, velim literas tuas perlegere, quotiescunque se
'obtulerit occasio. Quod me attinet, nullam occasio-
'nem ad te scribendi omittam. Latinitatis tuæ puritatem
'et elegantiam tibi sincere gratulor—"Rara avis in ter-
"ris." Filium tuum Episcopum illum reverendum,
'quem plurimo æstimo, cuique plurimum debeo, [meis
'verbis

'verbis saluta. Tibi, tuisque omnia fausta ac felicia op-
'to, atque exopto.

'Seni senex S. P. D.

Vale, DAVID DOIG.'

'P. S. Hæc fortasse negligentius exaravi: si quid erro-
'ris irrepserit, humanitati tuæ spectatæ confido.

To this Letter the answer was written also in Latin: But none who knew the writers will think of imputing this to any thing like pedantry. They wrote sometimes in this language, because it was quite as easy for them to compose a Letter in elegant Latin, as in English.

The following was Mr. Skinner's answer.

'Responsionem tuam, Charissime Doigi, ad meas
'præteriti anni, amicissimam quidem et acceptissimam,
'at laudibus ultra vel spem, vel meritum, latius scaten-
'tem ambabus ulnis arripui, dubiusque et tremulus quo-
'dammodo perlegi. Miratus quippe fueram tanti tem-
'poris silentium, et de liberiore in *Buchananum* censura
'conscius, offensionem tuam exinde metuebam. Per-
'gratum igitur habeo, te nunc metum omnem candide
'adeo et plene excussisse, et, quod magni æstimo, de a-
'nomalo illo, et multis nominibus illustri, viro eadem
'mecum sentire. In MARIAM sane nostram, formossi-
'mam illam, excultissimam, infelicissimam, diadematis
'aviti, quantum pro sexus imbecillitate potuit, quantum
'per subditorum proterviam licuit, decus, et ornamentum,
'quam

'quam in solio positam, ipse etiam *Buchananus* encomi-
'asticis plurimis, et elegantissimis celebraverat, immobi-
'li quodam amoris præjudicio ab ephebis affectus, ami-
'cos Mariæ omnes, fautores, excusatores, cujuscunque
'ordinis vel famæ, veneror, et diligo: Qui aliter senti-
'unt, et refutatis toties malevolorum calumniis morosi
'adhærent, procul habeo. Excusatiunculas quas vocas,
'validas quidem, et supervacaneas, sustineo omnes, præ-
'ter unam, quam in fine pones, *Ignaviam:* Nimium hoc,
'culpæque vicinum, nec tibi, tantisque septuaginta et
'quatuor annorum laboribus congruum. Languorem for-
'san, torporem, vigoris pristini remissionem, experiri
'jam senex potes: Ipse etiam, multis licet mensibus minor
'et experior, et doleo: Languidus interdum, torpensque,
'nec aptus amicis: Non tamen *ignavus* dicier inde velim.
'Carmen tuum, "de fortuna mediocri," non solum ad
'meritum approbo: Mihi etiam fortunæque meæ, totam
'vindico, ipsamque quam optarem, qua tamdiu potitus
'sum, vitæ conditionem ad amussim depictam gratus et
'lætus video. In remunerationem qualemcunque ludi-
'crum quod sequitur tibi offero; Rusticum illud *R.*
'*Burns* "upon a Rosebud," ad amici postulationem La-
'tine nuper attigi, et Sapphicis vestivi. Tu lege, et
'ride.*

'Dimissis nunc jocularibus, ad seria pergam, memor
'adagii—"Non joca delectant semper, non seria semper.
"Semper delectant seria mixta jocis."

'Sententiam tuam de "*Cantico Solomonis*," non qui-
'dem

* See this little elegant Sapphic Poem in Volume *Third.*

'dem novitiam, at de tali ingenio vix expectandam, mi-
'rabundus doleo. "*Bucolicum* orientale suspicaris, et
"vix" (nullo modo, si ita sit, ego dixerim) "libris sa-
"cris annumerandum." At cur, quæso, *Bucolicum?*
"Cur non *Basilicum* quid? *Regem* sæpe lego, *Pastorem*
'raro. Quod tamen quæstioni meæ non penitus incon-
'gruum videbitur, cum in mentem venit Davidicum il-
'lud—"*Pastor Israelis*," aut etiam Homericum—Αγ-
'αμεμνονα ποιμενα λαων; quærerem quoque, quam modes-
'te possum—An apud orientales extet coetaneum quid,
'vel Bucolici vel Gamieutici generis, quod juxtà canti-
'cum hocce positum, consonantiæ aliquid, vel in mate-
'ria, vel forma ostendat? Qui nunc solenniter adeo et
'pomposi, jactantur Arabismi, quem vocant, flores,
'mille, et quod supra post Solomonem annis, elegantia
'et sublimitate, ut fertur, nobilis, nihil heic adjumenti
'dabant, nec in collationis hujus arenam trahendi sunt.
'Cantilenas illas omnes, Persicas, Arabicas, et si quæ
'aliæ orientalis famæ, nobis licet antiquas, et idcirco in
'pretio habitas, Solomoni tamen modernas, et incogni-
'tas, ex illius fonte forsitan haustas, et in ignobile las-
'civitatis servitium coactas, ego quidem rejiciendas, eo-
'dem jure quo laudandas censeo. Antiquum hoc anti-
'qui Vatis opusculum, concinnum, elegans, et ultra vel
'Idyllii, vel Epithalamii numeros, grande quid et augus-
'tum, ex amore et majestate conflatum sonans, Ecclesia
'duplex, Judaica scilicet, prima in scriniis suis devote
'locavit, Evangelica postera constanter retinuit, copu-
'lam quasi inter legem et prophetas, ad illam retrorsum,
'ad hos antrorsum spectans, eisdem phrasibus utens, ea-
'dem mysteria pandens, et mutuum utrisque, et soni, et
'sensus nexum præbens: Quod in tali collegio reper-
'tum,

'tum, "quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus" 'receptum, ego pro tenuitate mea venerans Ποιημάτιον hoc 'in deliciis semper habui, et in illius elucidationem, per 'ejusdem gentis, et argumenti scriptores, absque extran- 'eorum ope, quantum habebam otii, quantum poteram 'laboris, lætanter per multos annos impendi, ad exem- 'plum quid per aliorum labores fieri posset, non ad os- 'tentationem quid per meos factum sit. Quicquid autem 'de poemate ipso fieret, quod mihi scripsisti, "te pror- 'sus mirari me in illius explicatione vacare," idem tibi de 'tua in "Mysteriis, et Mythologia" vacatione rescribo: 'classicam quidem, quam vocant, notitiam, investigatio- 'nem solicitam, dispositionis ordinem, sermonis proprie- 'tatem, ingenii per totum acumen, gratulabundus ad- 'miror et laudo. In quem finem, aut ad quos usus tan- 'ta eruditionis profusio, scire cupio? Mythologiam ha- 'bemus Christiani, si non philosophi, primitivam, mys- 'ticam, et salutiferam, mortalibus εις διδασκαλιας ακμην 'cœlitus traditam per longam annorum seriem πολυμερως 'και πολυτροπως renovatam, in Christo tandem, et per 'Christum mirifice conclusam. Quid nobis Ethnici illi 'ritus, recentiores dæmonum præstigiæ, in divinæ insti- 'tutionis corruptelam, per Satanam inductæ. et ad ani- 'marum lanianam fœdissime, et ex consilio detortæ, ni- 'si dandum sit Spencero, Marshamo, aliisque, Deum, ad 'Satanicum exemplar, sua finxisse et tradidisse Mosi, 'quod persuasum habeo a te nunquam admissum iri. Fa- 'tendum igitur Salomonica mea, auctoris noti, antiqui- 'tatis fixæ, disquisitione qualicunque æque digna esse ac 'Osirica, Dionysiaca, Eleusinia tua, incerti originis, ex- 'empli pessimi, vana, periculosa, impia omnia, quæ 'nôsse parum prodest, ignorare nemini nocebit.

'Quod

'Quod ad Philologiam tuam attinet, elaboratam illam, 'plenam, nobilem, utilem, alta voce proclamo. In mul- 'tis, in Græcis præsertim particulis, me instructum li- 'bentissime agnosco. In quibusdam, quæ ad Hebraica 'spectant, dissentire audeo. Quas objectiunculas (stric- 'turas tu vocas) ad D. Gleig transmiseram, communican- 'das tibi nec mandavi nec prohibui. Liberiores fateor, 'at nec maligni animi, nec constructionis asperæ huma- 'nitas tua placidissime admisit. De characteribus Sama- 'ritanis, quos tu primævos probare niteris, non multum 'disceptare curo, quamvis rationes non paucas nec leves, 'in contrariam, si operæ pretium esset, adducendas ha- 'beo. Scriptionem alphabeticam ante Mosen, gravioris 'illam materiæ thesin, non facile concedo. Valeant Cran- 'brookensis Johnsoni argumenta quantum valere possint. 'Defensoris inscitia ipsum tangit; quod defendendum sus- 'ceperat non destruit. Probabile saltem manebit Decalo- 'gum, scriptionem istius formæ primam, Deum ipsum 'mirandæ adeo, et humanis viribus inexplorandæ artis 'magistrum primum, Mosen suum primum inter homi- 'nes artificem fuisse. Probabilia omnia cujuscunque pon- 'deris in adjumentum, vel ornamentum fidei, neuti- 'quam minuenda, nec imbellibus æque telis, hoc po- 'tissimum tempore, pulsanda vellem. Divisam autem, 'partialem, et interruptam, qualem tu suspicaris, Mosis 'πνευματοφοριαν nullo modo admittere possum. Plenam 'illam, et continuam, præterita memorantem, præsentia 'dirigentem, in omnibus, etiam in minimis, si quæ mi- 'nima sunt, amanuensis sui doctricem, et ductricem cre- 'do. Hoc mihi fundamentum posui, unde me excussum 'nullus Sol aspiciet, nulla critices, nulla rhetorices po- 'tentia inveniet. Ex officio, Mosi, et prophetis in omni-

' bus devinctus, ex ingenio Hebrææ, quæ illorum linguæ
' ad enthusiasmum usque, at enthusiasmum nulla Anticy-
' râ medicabilem, deditissimus, obscurus tamen, et apud
' rusticos inclusus, " libris peregrinus et aulis," multa et
' forsan paradoxa concepi, cultioribus, et inter cultiores
' versantibus, minus placitura, nec ad limatiorem hujus
' sæculi indolem satis polita. Commixtionem sane illam,
' tantis et tot laudibus cumulatam, inter duas has vene-
' randi nominis, Theologiam et Philosophiam, si reproba-
' re non ausim, attamen, ut hodiernis artibus composi-
' tam, non prorsus approbo, quippe ex qua commodi pa-
' rum video, periculi non parum metuo. Meticulosi hanc
' animi angustiam, et si ita vis, parvitatem, tu fælicioris
' ingenii, commiserandam, non culpandam aut irridendam
' censebis. Diverse licet in circumstantiis sentire vide-
' mur; tu meo judicio fortasse minus, ego tuo fortasse
' plus quam par est, concordes tamen in summam rei, et
' oracula sacra debito honore, et studio amplectentes, et
' opto, et spero. Hutchinsonianæ scholæ, etiam inter
' vetustissimos, discipulum me palam profiteor. Ex fon-
' tibus istis multa hausi quæ mihi arrident, quæ instruc-
' tionis multum, et præbuere, et præbent. De philoso-
' phicis ex lingua sacra deductis, quatenus intelligo, nul-
' lus dubito: Theologica summatim adopto, non quia
' Hutchinsoniana, sed quia veritati, meo saltem judicio,
' consona. Quicquid Hutchinsonius ipse in asperitate
' styli peccavit, reverentia Scripturæ compensat. Ad
' mentes, non ad aures scripsit. Sicubi interpres delirat,
' novæ et insolitæ interpretationis formulæ condonatum
' sit. Horatianum ergo illud meretur—" Ubi plura ni-
" tent in carmine, non ego paucis offendor maculis."—
' Sed de his satis, tu ne dicas nimis. Collocutionem quam

' sup-

'supponis ipse quoque impensissime optarem, at tanto 'intervallo dissitis, et provectiore jam senecta depressis 'heu! non sperandam lugeo. Me certe videres, quan- 'tumvis sententiæ tenacem, at neque fastuosum nec ri- 'gidum, discendi quidem magis quam docendi cupidum, 'quippe qui γηραςκω αει διδαςκομενος. Quod igitur χας- 'μα μεγα et anni negant, ipsi nobis, quantum in manibus 'est, præstemus, et si non ora cominus, at calamo eminus 'libere et candide confabulemur. Tu indolem meam 'quodammodo noscis, ego tuam, nec penitus easdem, 'nec in omnibus diversas, neutram tamen commercio e- 'pistolari, vel ineptam, vel imparem.

'Filium meum Episcopum (solamen mihi, nec eccle- 'siolæ nostræ inutilem) tui in maxima æstimatione me- 'morem habes. Qui mecum sunt, Vetula et Nepos te 'amicorum meorum albo additum gaudent, tibique eo 'nomine fausta omnia et læta optant. Tuos, si quos ha- 'bes, nostris verbis amanter saluta. Vive fælix, et in 'Christo. Vale,

'Tui observantissimus, &c. J. S.

Linshart, Oct. 21, 1794.

In the summer of 1795, Dr. Doig, and Mr. Ramsay of Ochtertyre were so kind as to pay a visit to Mr. Skinner, and he had also the pleasure of spending a week with them in Peterhead. This is gratefully acknowledged in the following Letter, containing also some enquiries about his manuscript on the "Song of Solomon," which had been put into Dr. Doig's hands, with a view of obtaining his candid opinion of it.

Linshart, Dec. 3. 1795.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,

'After a long silence, owing, on my side, to having 'forgot from what quarter the correspondence was to o- 'pen again, I have, at last, for fear of my being in fault, 'taken up the pen to acknowledge, what I never can for- 'get, the honour done me by two such characters tra- 'velling a hundred miles to see me. Whatever your 'own opinion of the jaunt may be, where, I much fear, 'you have felt a disappointment, I shall look back to that 'week of both Platonic, and Epicurean luxury (more by 'far than ever I had enjoyed before, or hope ever to en- 'joy again) with a pleasure in the grateful remembrance 'of the entertainment, and a dash of regret, that it was 'so short. I was truly happy to hear, that you and your 'worthy companion got well home, and I hope, neither 'of you have suffered, I cannot think you have gained, 'any thing, by your excursion to our "Buchanæa tel- "lus," which, however defective in the poetic scenery of "hills and groves, and purling streams," is upon the 'main, far from being a despicable spot, whatever shall 'be thought of its Incolæ. Displiceat *populus, terra* 'placere potest—and, I trust, it shall have the testimony 'of two sufficiently competent judges in its favour.

'You will have had time before now, if you have 'thought it worth the while, to inspect and examine the "Indigesta mei, nec adhuc perfecta cerebri proles," 'which, upon that account therefore, and none other, 'an

'an old doting parent may be excused for enquiring about, 'with some degree of anxiety, even although that anxie- 'ty should to the critic, or philosopher, appear imperti- 'nent. I am abundantly sensible how open it lies to cen- 'sure from both these quarters: But I can depend on 'Dr. Doig's well known candour to make allowance for 'any imperfections about it, from the circumstances un- 'der which it has been produced. Perhaps I may say '(but whether to the credit of my understanding, or to 'the condemnation of my impudence, tu judex esto) that 'few, if any, have ventured so much abroad in the world, 'with such scanty assistance, from either books or con- 'versation, as from my hampered lot of life, I have been 'furnished with. In the present production indeed, I 'had assumed a *postulatum* (jure an injuria) that no fo- 'reign assistance was necessary. My office required, my 'curiosity prompted, and my long standing in the mini- 'stry has afforded, a considerable acquaintance with the '*Bible*, from which I am *now* fully satisfied of the benefit 'of the postulatum I had set out with, that the *Bible* is 'sufficient, if well understood, to explain itself. I know 'you will meet with many things in that little favourite 'piece of mine, which you justly may, and no doubt 'will pronounce *fanciful*. Others have done so before. 'But you will observe that these *fancifuls* are the result 'of derivation, not of invention, and that, at least, I 'have offered something like grammar, and analogy for 'them: The "Shem-al," (left hand) for instance, and "En-ged-i," of which, whether I have proved my *fancy* 'to be the true meaning, or not, I may call upon any 'Critic to *disprove*: The "Aphriun" (Solomon's cha- 'riot) I hope will so far have your approbation, as it

'coin-

'coincides with *your* article "*Ophir*," in the Encyclo-
'pædia, which I had not seen, till long after I had writ-
'ten mine. You will observe, that I have laboured my
'interpretation of "Sabaoth," to a great, perhaps too
'great, length, because I therein differ from all my *Hut-*
'*chinsonian* masters. By some, no doubt, I shall be
'blamed for so doing;—but at least it will shew that I
'am not "juratus in verba," or tied to the belief of any
'*modern* whatever. I do not mean, by all this, to com-
'mend, or recommend my own performance, although
'if I did, I should have many eminent examples, if not
'to warrant, at least to excuse me. The attempt, how-
'ever weakly carried on, or, as some may think, rashly
'undertaken, was at least in character, and to use a mo-
'dern phrase, entirely *professional*. It has been the de-
'lightful employment of many a spare hour, which I
'thought I could not turn to better account, than in
'searching by scripture-light into every thing, which is
'to be found in that sacred code distinguished as *scrip-*
'*ture*, and thereby testifying my zeal, obscure as I
'am, for the honour of what I believe to be *revelation*,
'to which no magisterial sneer from whatever quarter
'shall ever deter me from shewing my devout regard.
'I am led into this strain, digressive as you may think it,
'by what I meet with in the last volume, which I have
'seen, of the Encyclopædia, where, in the article "*Re-*
"*surrection*," the Editors say, "We have felt the high-
"est indignation on hearing men of learning and genius
"affirm, from a false zeal for the honour of revelation,
"that without its instruction mankind would not have
"known even the animal functions of nature." You
'know, my good Sir, that the word "false" may signify
'either

'either "hypocritical," or "mistaken," and it might 'have been expected that writers pronouncing a sentence 'of such "high" censure as this passage contains, would 'have done it in terms of no ambiguity. I shall take 'their meaning in the softest sense, and even under that 'acceptation, I cannot help thinking "Indignation, high-"est indignation," by far too harsh a term. Zeal for 'the honour of revelation, if mistaken, will from the 'candid meet with *pity*, or may to the philosopher be an 'object of *contempt*,—but *indignation* it certainly does not 'deserve from either. Be not displeased at my touching 'on this disagreeable subject. I feel for "revelation," 'by which I have a living *here*, and expect one *hereafter*. 'I am therefore hurt by any thing which I perhaps fool-'ishly imagine, tends to degrade it; and to whom shall 'one complain, if not to the candid friend, who, what-'ever he may think of the complaint, will not revile the 'complainer?—But to have done with this peevish wan-'dering. When you have gone through my Manuscript, 'you will be so kind as to transmit it to my brother in E-'dinburgh, who will forward it to Aberdeen. I do not 'expect your entire approbation of it, nor was it with that 'view I put it into your hand, but only to shew my will-'ingness to amuse you, if I could. I may therefore hope, 'you will be merciful to it on that account, and not em-'pannel it at the bar of *Classic Literature*, which, if it 'could speak for itself, it would reject as *not competent*. 'You will now see by this, and by the trial of my con-'versation, how unfit a correspondent I should be for the 'extensive geniuses of the present enlightened age, im-'mersed, as I acknowledge myself, in a bathos of venera-'tion for the *Bible*, and startling at every attempt, or ap-

'pear-

'pearance of bringing any external support to, or incum-
'brance upon, its original *learning*, which in my opinion
'(and of this opinion I am most tenacious, however unable
'to defend it) is capable to *give* assistance, but *needs*
'none. The unfinished specimen, which I have exposed
'to your critical eye, will convince you of this; and all
'I shall say farther about it is, that as its subject,
'which, for form sake, I shall call my *Text*, is entitled
'to some degree of respect, from the company it has
'long kept, so my Commentary, quantulacunque foret,
'when tried by the *Theistical* (I must not say *Deistical*,
'though Theos and Deus be the very same in sense, and
'much the same in sound) standard of *reason* will be
'found, though much above it, to be no way contrary
'to it. Let both be compared with the paganic parallels
'of even fabulous antiquity, of which you have given us
'such an ample elucidation, and I shall leave it with your-
'self, where the preference, if any be due, ought in
'character to be given.

'I hope your late fellow-traveller is in good health,
'though I much fear, not in good spirits. The death of
'his worthy kinsman Lord Abercrombie will be a heavy
'stroke to him, and prevent for some time at least any
'effort of that *Iconizing** genius, which he possesses in
'an

* The good old Gentlemen here mentioned, John Ramsay, Esq. of Ochtertyre, having always had an uncommon genius for what Mr. Skinner calls *Iconizing*, sent him in the year 1793, a picture or *Icon*, accompanied with a Letter, in which he says—"In the course of my solitary walks on the "banks of the Teith, I lately bethought me of expressing, in a sort of am-"phibious strain, a traveller's opinion of Linshart and its Landlord. I "wish your features and fortune, (which are abundantly prominent) were more

'an uncommon degree. When opportunity offers, be 'so good as make my grateful remembrance to him, till 'I can find something to entertain him with in the form 'of a letter; and I have only farther to request, that you 'will believe me to be, with real respect, and sincere 'good wishes, Yours, J. S.

" more perfectly delineated. You may perhaps think it too long; but I " once thought it impossible to *do you* under thirty or forty lines. I have " not translated it, as I usually do, but that is of little consequence. Ac- " cept of it, with all its imperfections, as a token of my sincere esteem " and veneration."—As such it is here presented to the reader capable of admiring the neatness of its epigrammatic turn.

LINSHART.

Si modo, viator! virtuti musisque faveas,
Domum istam stramento intectam,
Agello parum silvoso positam;
Ne, dum potis es, præterito;
Nam fores hospitales confidenter reseras:
Ibi habitat, gregemque pascit amatam
JOANNES SKINNER:
Cujus sermonem, carmina, munerisque sacri labores,
Dum candide respicis,
Sodalem, poetam, pastorem mireris egregium;
Cui leporis vena opipara
Pietate bene temperata;
Qui ingenio et acuto, et feraci præditus
Cælestis sapientiæ fontes nec corrumpet, nec spernet.
Familia sua humanitus felix!
Cum blandæ juventutis uxore superstite,
Nunc vivit septuagenarius;
Honoribus sane titulisque major,
Filio suo inter Scotiæ Episcopos Primo
Presbyteri reverentia, parentis amore paret.
Priusquam, viator! hinc decederis,
Buchaniam fortasse non revisurus,
Mecum certe exclames,
Fortunate Senex ——— longum vale,
Sero in cœlum recipiaris Incola!

To the Letter thus laid before the reader, it was not long before Mr. Skinner received from Dr. Doig the following friendly answer.

Stirling, Feb. 13*th*, 1796.

Rev. Sir,

'I now sit down to write you, and in doing so I am 'abundantly sensible, that I ought to begin with an a- 'pology, if indeed my behaviour would admit of it.— 'Perhaps you may recollect, that, when I had the plea- 'sure of seeing you at Peterhead, I was complaining of 'a pain and weakness of my eyes. The pain went off 'in process of time, but the weakness continued all the 'summer, and, I am afraid, will continue to the end of 'my life. During the winter, you will naturally reflect 'that my professional duty engages me the whole day, 'and you know, that to read by candle light is a task too 'difficult for tender eyes. This was the reason, at least 'the principal one, that prevented my perusing your va- 'luable Manuscript, and returning it accompanied with 'a letter a long while ago. Your very polite epistle gave 'my flagging spirits a seasonable fillip, and proved "an "use of exhortation," as you Gentlemen of the Gown 'use to call it; and so I come now to communicate my 'sentiments, interspersed with a very few strictures upon 'your excellent performance. I used many years ago to 'read the "Song of Songs" as an elegant, sublime, ani- 'mated, but irregular oriental composition. In those days 'I did not much trouble my head about its canonical con- 'stitution, or allegorical application. In reading your

'com-

'composition I am led to admire your piety, industry, 'ingenuity, and uncommon knowledge of the original 'language. The strain of piety, which pervades it, is so 'warm, so animated, and so irreprehensibly orthodox, 'that, were it not for the Greek and Hebrew every where 'interspersed, I am convinced, that every person, blessed 'with a pious frame of spirit, might read it with equal 'pleasure and edification. But the nature of your under-'taking rendered such a process indispensably necessary. 'Could that have been spared, I believe it would have 'been an acceptable work to the public at large.

'The argument you adduce in your introduction, in 'order to prove the divine inspiration of the Poem, is, I 'believe, the most plausible, and the most cogent that 'ever has been, or can be advanced. All scripture is gi-'ven by divine inspiration. If not given by divine inspi-'ration, why was it admitted into the canon? Let Ezra, 'and the Members of the great Synagogue answer that 'question. It is the opinion of the Rabbins, that Ezra 'collected, corrected, and promulgated the Hebrew 'scriptures, just as they now stand in order and succes-'sion, and Jerom says, that he dismissed the Samaritan 'characters, and substituted the Chaldean in their stead. 'This by the bye. There is a tradition among the Jews, 'and Spinoza mentions it, that there was a warm dispute 'among the members of the great synagogue, whether 'Proverbs and Ecclesiastes should be admitted into the 'catalogue of the Hagiographa, and Ezekiel into that of 'the prophets:—At length they carried it only by two 'votes. Had I been a member of that venerable assem-'bly in the days of my incredulity, I believe, I should

'have added the "Song of Songs" to the number: It
'seems they did not, which is certainly a collateral proof
'of your position. I know not what ideas the Jews had
'annexed to this "Song," whether they took it in a spi-
'ritual, or wholly in a literal sense. Neither Christ, nor
'his apostles quote it, nor do the Targums exhibit it as a
'spiritual Song, as far as I recollect, for I write this only
'from memory. Philo Judæus is an allegorical writer,
'but makes no mention of the Canticum Canticorum;
'nor do any of the Rabbins, whom I have seen, intimate
'any such idea as its mystical meaning. From this in-
'duction I would conclude, that the ancient Jews were
'not apprized of the allegorical sense of that excellent
'composition. But the fathers of the church were per-
'haps extravagantly addicted to allegory and mysticism;
'at least St. Ignatius and Clemens Romanus most certain-
'ly were so. This allegorical turn of mind did more or
'less chequer and diversify all their compositions. Ori-
'gen was an excellent scholar, but immoderately addict-
'ed to the allegorical bias of the orientals. I have just
'now before me two Homilies of that father upon the
'First and Second Chapters of the Song, exactly in your
'style; indeed so like, that one would almost be tempt-
'ed to imagine you had copied his sentiments. Yet I
'know, this is impossible in your circumstances,—so
'there can be no suspicion of plagiarism. He has in-
'deed made no use of the Hebrew, though, you know,
'he was an excellent Hebrew scholar. And now, Reve-
'rend Sir, since I am got into the chapter of allegory, a fi-
'gure, I own, I am not altogether fond of, you will give
'me leave to suggest, that some of your allegories seem
'to me to be carried rather too far. Of that description is

'your

'your account of—" *his banner over me was love*," and 'of some other passages. In these however, your accu-'rate and judicious exposition of Hebrew words, and ob-'scure texts, more than compensates the length of your 'excursions. This too is exactly in the manner and 'style of the fathers. For my own part, I am always sus-'picious of mystical expositions, because upon this plan 'there is no rule that I know of, but "the analogy of "faith," which is indeed a just one, but the application 'is not always intuitively evident. Your ready applica-'tion of the Hebrew words I sincerely admire. But, 'Sir, are you not a Hutchinsonian? I have Holloway's '*Originals* before me, and think there is an analogy be-'tween his and yours. I frankly own, that I cannot pre-'tend to be a critic in that species of literature. I applied 'to the Hebrew rather late in life, and traced its cogna-'tion with the Arabian, Persian, and Egyptian, and es-'pecially with the Greek and Latin, but never once tried 'to discover any meaning in the words, different from 'what they carry "ipsa fronte." I am highly pleased 'with your method of expressing the Hebrew letters in 'Roman characters, which will enable your unlearned 'readers to go on, as well as the learned. I think there 'are only a few Hebrew terms of the vast number you 'employ, which might be more properly translated. I 'recollect one, and that is *En-gedi*. *En*, which I would 'write *Chin*, with *ch* pronounced like the Greek χ, sig-'nifies a *fountain* as well as an *eye*. I would therefore 'translate it the *Kid's Well*. Thus we have *Enshemish*, 'the *Sun's Well*—*Endor*, *the House on the Well*, or the '*Abode on the Well*. By the bye, your pronunciation 'differs from mine, and that of Origen differs from us 'both,

'both, as appears from a specimen of his **Hexapla**, still 'extant; and Jerom writes the foregoing **word** *En-gad-* 'di. I entirely approve of your discarding **the** idea of 'the marriage between Solomon and Pharaoh's daugh- 'ter, which is all finical nonsense, as is **Mons. Bossuet's** 'division into the seven days of the Jewish **matrimonial** 'feast. Did you never read Lady Mary **Montague's** 'Letters, and her Turkish Song, and Mr. **Hasselquist's** 'and Dr. Shaw's Observations on the Holy **Land**, on the 'Customs of the African Jews, on the Eyes of the **Ante-** 'lope, the Fiery Eyes of the Dragon, the **Tiger**, and 'the Lion? These would have been most edifying em- 'bellishments to your piece, and would have captivated 'every curious Zoologist. But, Sir, this is all a joke.— 'You have substituted things infinitely more valuable, and 'I must repeat again the encomium I set out with. The 'piece appears to me a striking monument of your piety, 'learning, industry, ingenuity, and extensive and accu- 'rate acquaintance with the oracles of truth. **Now**, Sir, 'you see I have dealt honestly by you; to use the com- 'mon proverb,—"Perhaps as plain as pleasant." It is 'my constant practice, and by it I have lost more than a 'friend or two before this time. I hope your good na- 'ture will excuse my pitiful strictures, which you are at 'liberty to adopt or reprobate at pleasure, and I have 'now found an opportunity of returning your Manu- 'script, which, I know, you are impatient to have.— 'Your friend Mr. Ramsay is well: I heard of him last 'week. I have read the Encyclopædia "Resurrection," 'and can tell you, that the Editor corrected and chastized 'it without mercy, before it was published, and by so

'doing

'doing heartily disobliged the author. I beg you will 'write me soon, and not mind the postage.

'I have read your "Sceptre,"* and like it vastly. I 'have shewn it to some of the clergy here, who admire 'it. This letter is a mere chaos, and is certainly full of 'chirographical errors, which you will excuse. My 'eyes ache sadly. May that gracious Being, who has 'preserved you and me to such an advanced period of 'life, grant us both at last a happy exit!

'Yours most sincerely,

'DAVID DOIG.'

In the following Letter from Mr. Skinner, in answer to Dr. Doig's, their correspondence on the subject of the "Song of Solomon," is brought to a conclusion.

Linshart, April 15, 1796.

DEAR AND WORTHY DOCTOR,

'Your favour of February the 13th, with its concomi- 'tant, came safe to hand, and gave me the much wished 'for pleasure of finding you well, as far at least, as a 'weight of years, and consequential infirmities, will per- 'mit. You needed no apology for delay. I well know, 'because I deeply feel, what a task letter-writing is to 'weak eyes, and crazy fingers, especially when, as in 'my case, they have but a so-and-so kind of head to di- 'rect

* The "Dissertation on Jacob's Prophecy," above noticed.

'rect them. Yet there is this convenience in, if not encouragement to, the attempt, that we "*Vetuli, et senectute pressi*," have a congenial, because experimental, sympathy with one another, which the *Juniores*, in the meridian of genius, and vigour, think they have no occasion for: And, I believe, such as *you* and *I*, can look back to *our* meridian with another kind of view than *they* can have in looking forward to *their* decline, as we can with more certainty remember what we have been, than conjecture what we may be. There is something grand in the poet's "Fuimus Troes," and however much the nick-name of "Have-beens" may be scouted, there is a latent pleasure in having a title to the appellation. But enough of these senilities, though I hope, not too much, considering the "unde," and "ad quem;" *seventy-five* to *seventy-seven*. An apostle once "gloried in his infirmities."

'Your kind treatment, which I take to be next to approbation of my "unlicked cub," does me great honour, and even stimulates my pride to find such a favourable sentence from such a judge. Many of my brethren hereabout have expressed a fondness for it; but, as they are not competent masters of the language, I suspect them of partiality to the child on the father's account. It is otherwise with you, whatever you may profess to the contrary; and from what I have seen of you, I have no hesitation to apply to you the character which, it is said in a late publication, Bishop Atterbury gave of the good Bishop Berkeley, that "he did not "think so much understanding, so much knowledge, so "much innocence, and such humility, had been the por-

"tion

" tion of any but angels, till he saw that gentleman"—
' Under this well-founded impression, I can, without de-
' signing to impugn, venture to argue on my own side,
' and maintain the canonical authority of the piece in
' question, of which I am pert enough to suppose, I have
' in some measure brought you over to the admission.—
' I find you indeed gravelled about the Rabbins, Targums,
' and Philo, taking no notice of it, which, you know, is
' but a negative argument, and to which I might oppose
' another such, that though our Saviour severely re-
' proves the Jews for making the word of God of no ef-
' fect, by their *traditions*, he never charges them with
' corrupting it by interpolations, and improper mixtures
' of compositions unworthy of such a place,—which this
' Poem, fine and elegant as it is, certainly was, if to be
' taken only in a literal sense, without any spiritual ap-
' plication. What ideas the Rabbins, as they are called,
' might have had of it, is not very material to christians,
' as the oldest of that tribe, whose opinions we have any
' account of, though they were of more value than they
' are, is much posterior to the christian æra. We are
' amused with these Rabbins, without being told *who*, or
' *when* they were, as if to them, and them only, we were
' obliged for the Hebrew scriptures. But we forget that
' there were early *christian* Rabbins, and some of them
' writers too, Rabbi Paul, Rabbi Peter, Rabbi James,
' &c. invested with the plenitude of that character by the
' true RAB, and who, on their going out, after the
' gift of tongues, to execute their high commission,
' would, we may believe, carry their Hebrew Bibles
' with them, and probably deposit some of them in the
' several churches of their formation: Whence it is by

'no means irrational to conclude, that we have the pos-
'session of the Hebrew scriptures originally from the
'fountain of *apostolic* tradition, without being indebted
'for the blessing to the much magnified mode of *apostate*
'conveyance. It is indeed my first opinion, that had it not
'been for this check—of the convert Jews being possess-
'ed of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as their hardened
'countrymen, like two authentic duplicates of the same
'charter, these unbelieving outstanders, from their root-
'ed malice against christianity, would have hammered
'the Bible on their own anvil, and given us a *new* edi-
'tion of Moses and the prophets: Instead of which they
'early fell to work, first with their *Mishna* and *Gemara*,
'then with their vowel-points, and *Keriketibs*, and in
'end, with their whole farrago of Talmudic nonsense, all
'with a view to obscure, and pervert the text, which
'they durst not alter or corrupt. You will twit me here
'perhaps with—"Are you not a Hutchinsonian?" But,
'let me hope, my dear Doctor, that "*Hutchinsonian*"
'does not in your vocabulary signify *Fool*. These things
'were said long before Hutchinson was born, and will be
'said and proved too, though he should be forgotten.—
'It grieves me indeed to find such a run of veneration to
'these wretched infidels, in matters where the christian
'faith is so immediately concerned, and such stress laid
'upon their "traditions," about Ezra, and the "men
"of the great synagogue," most of which are but "gra-
"tis dictums" at best;—such as that they discarded the
'old Samaritan letters, brought in the vowel-points, &c.
'The first of these you adopt, and reject the latter, but
'produce no scriptural authority for either, and if I were
'to argue from probability, I might say, it is not likely
'that

'that a man of Ezra's character, and high commission, 'would either have made such an addition to the sacred 'text as these vowels contain, or "dismissed" the ve- 'nerable letters of the finger of God's own choosing, to 'substitute in their stead a late fabrication, however pret- 'ty, of professed idolaters. Be in this what may, we 'have certain intelligence of what Ezra did, from what 'his own pen has left us, and all beyond that is but 'conjecture without book. You mention, upon the 'warrant of what Spinoza says,—a Jewish tradition of a 'synagogical dispute decided by the poor majority of "two votes." Now, besides the futility of such a story, 'which a person of your penetration certainly sees 'through, I could have wished Spinoza's name had been 'left out. Spinoza is, I am bold to say, of as disgusting 'sound to the christian ear as Hutchinson possibly can 'be; and I hope Dr. Doig does not view them both in 'the same light. There is another thing in your Letter, 'which I cannot but take notice of, where you say— "You applied to the Hebrew rather too late in life, and "with a design, for which, you believe, I would hardly "forgive you, if I knew it, and therefore you will not "tell me." My forgiveness, Sir, is of no great impor- 'tance; but such as it is, I cannot allow myself to sup- 'pose a thing about Dr. Doig, to which I could refuse 'it. Sure I am, it has been no Spinoza-design: And 'what, if from your context, I should guess it to have 'been, what I know of one of my own brethren, and 'have been told of an English Bishop of great conspicui- 'ty, with a view to confute Hutchinson, which is a lau- 'dable attempt, if Hutchinson be in the wrong, and 'needs no forgiveness. I began near fifty years ago

'with much the same view: I have read, carefully 'read, many of his opponents, Bedford, Shuckford, 'Sharp &c. and have got fully as much confirmation in 'my present notions, from the strain of their opposition, 'as from the strength of his arguments. Even Voltaire 'has strengthened my attachment to christianity.

'I am glad, you are so fully pleased with my "Scep-"tre," which, you see, goes on the same plan with the "Song," both of them strictly etymological, without the 'aid of allegory, which, you say, you are not fond of, 'and which I do not understand the meaning of, after all 'the laboured explication which Bishops Brown and 'Butler have given of that much used term. I may have 'fallen into something like it now and then, but never 'had it formally in my eye, as I always found enough in 'the language itself for my purpose of breaking the shell 'to get at the kernel, without minding the technical terms 'of allegory, mysticism, and the like. But I must have 'done. Both paper and subject require it. You called 'upon me to write, and I have obeyed, perhaps "more "plain," as you say, "than pleasant:" Whatever mine 'may be, yours, I find, is always pleasant; there is an 'art in that.—Remember me to my brother beside you '(Dr. Gleig) whom I congratulate on his late dignifica-'tion. I owe him a Letter, and am afraid he will charge 'me with giving up the correspondence; but the truth is, 'I found I could be of no use to him in his great under-'taking, and I could not think of both burdening him, and 'interrupting him with my heterogeneous stuff. He has 'my love and esteem, and when he is at rest from his 'present labour, we may renew our skirmishings—"Pri-"amus contra Achillem."

'I

'I shall call upon the good Laird (Ochtertyre) some 'of these days, when I have collected any thing to amuse 'him: For instruction is beyond my sphere. I make '*your* concluding prayer most heartily *mine*, with this 'addition—That we may meet, dignante DEO, and talk 'Hebrew and Greek together in Abraham's bosom. In 'which hope I rest,

Yours in all sincerity of esteem,

'JOHN SKINNER.

After his Manuscript on the "Song of Solomon" was returned from Stirling, Mr. Skinner had an opportunity of shewing it to several of his acquaintances, capable of forming some judgment of its merits, all of whom expressed the warmest approbation, both of the piety of his design, and of the happy manner in which it was executed. By means of his Son at Aberdeen, it was also submitted to the inspection of some learned Divines in England, amply qualified by their knowledge of the Hebrew language, to appreciate the usefulness of a work, which derived its chief value from a judicious application of the radical meaning of such of the expressive words of that language as occur in this wonderful portion of the sacred volume. While these English friends took the trouble of revising the Manuscript, and pointing out some things worthy of notice in the way of preparing it for the press, they at the same time regretted that works of that nature, having little recommendation that was likely to render them popular, there was of course but little encouragement for their publication. To this opinion, founded on the obvious risk of engaging in such speculations, it was

in

in some measure owing, that this new version of the Canticles had not been sooner offered to the public. It is now to make a part of these posthumous volumes, as, what the Author used to call it, his "favourite work," under the modest title, which he prefixed to it, of— "*An Essay towards a literal*," by which he meant, "*a* "*true radical Exposition of the* SONG OF SONGS, *which* "*is* SOLOMON's." In the form of a *Proœmium*, or prefatory address, couched in some elegant Latin lines, the learned reader will find a concise account of what he has to expect from this humble attempt to display the truly christian object of that divine POEM, whose constant subject is the love of *Christ* to his church, and the love of his church to her JESUS.

About the time, when Mr. Skinner finished his Essay on the Canticles, which, he used to say, "was so agree- "able an employment, that he was almost sorry when it "was concluded," he was applied to on another theological subject, to which he had long turned his thoughts, as a matter worthy of the most serious attention. His Common-place Book abounds with a variety of Extracts from different authors, shewing their opinions of what christians are taught to believe respecting the nature and mode of existence of the adorable TRINITY. In one place he observes, that "the oldest heretics perhaps on "the subject of the Trinity were the Noctians, or Sabel- "lians, who taught *one* Hypostasis in Deity under three "names or appearances. Some time after them arose "the Arians, who taught that the Father exclusively "was the *One* supreme God, that the Son was be- "gotten or made, and that the Holy Ghost was either "an

" an attribute, or a creature. This was the Arian Tri-
" nity, in opposition to which the Athanasian Creed
" says—the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy
" Ghost, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eter-
" nal, and on this foundation, it is the belief of many
" sincere, and well-informed christians, that in the one,
" undivided, unbegotten, self-existent Essence, which
" the Hebrew scriptures call JEHOVAH, there are THREE
" co-equal, co-ordinate, co-eternal Subsistences, or Per-
" sons, who have become *Aleim* (the Hebrew word tran-
" lated GOD) that is, under covenant, or agreement, in
" terms whereof they have taken to themselves the œco-
" nomical titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in
" whose *name* all christians are commanded to be bap-
" tized."

As exhibiting a branch of the fundamental doctrine thus briefly stated, there appeared, in the year 1795, a pamphlet, published in Oxford and London, under the title of " Θεανθρωπος της Καινης Διαθηκης, or, *An Appeal* " *to the New Testament, in proof of the Divinity of the* " *Son of God. By Charles Hawtrey, M. A. Vicar of* " *Bampton, Oxfordshire.*" According to Mr Hawtrey, the dispensation of the Θεανθρωπος is the dispensation of the λογος united with man's nature, and by this union he became the Son,—the term Son being first assumed, when the λογος or word was made flesh, before which the *word* was not necessarily *Son*. But after the incarnation, the term *Word* is dropt, and *Son* only used—and as " the " term *Son* necessarily implies subordination and subjec-
" tion to the will of the *Father*, which subordination
" and subjection are as truly such if voluntary, as if by

" the

" the necessity of nature; therefore," adds Mr. Hawtrey, " it is no impeachment of our Lord's divinity that " he was subordinate and subject;—it is no impeachment " of it that he was what a Son necessarily must be, infe- " rior in respect of the filiation, although not in respect " of nature."

The first public opponent of Mr. Hawtrey's opinion was the then Bishop of Chester, who published a Sermon preached before the University of Oxford, on Sunday the 8th of November, 1795, and entitled—" *The eternal* " *Generation of the Son of God.*" This doctrine the Bishop thought it sufficient to establish by the usual arguments, and while he combated Mr. Hawtrey's hypothesis, he did not fail to treat him with the respect that was due to his good intentions. About a year or so after, another tract was published, called—" *The eternal Filiation of* " *the Son of God asserted, on the Evidence of the sacred* " *Scriptures, the Consent of the Fathers, and the Nicene* " *Council. By the Rev. Frodsham Hodson, M.A. Fel-* " *low of Brazen Nose College, Oxford.*" The chief point, from which this Tract derived its strength, was the supposed authority of the fathers, although the author also laboured to prove, that the words πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως (Col. i. 15.) imply *priority*, not *pre-eminence* of birth.

Mr. Hawtrey however was not dismayed by all this opposition, but maintained his opinion in a subsequent publication, called—" *A particular Enquiry into the* " *Doctrine of the Eternal Filiation; being a Sequel to* " *the Appeal to the New Testament, in proof of the Di-*

" *vi-*

" *vinity of the Son of God.*" *The British Critic*, in reviewing this Tract, quotes several texts of scripture, as, in his opinion, hostile to Mr. Hawtrey's doctrine, yet is obliged to acknowledge the truth of what Mr. Hawtrey alleges, " that great advantage is gained against the Arians " by denying that the eternal Word was the Son, before " he came into the world." Knowing how strenuous Mr. Skinner was for maintaining this advantage, his Son at Aberdeen sent him a full account of all these literary proceedings, hinting also the propriety of his supporting the Vicar of Bampton in those sentiments, which had been so fully approved by himself, after the most sincere and diligent enquiry. A Letter written in return to this application contains the following remarks.—" What you " write about the doctrinal disputes, which, it seems, are " breaking out among some of the English clergy, sur- " prizes me a good deal, as I had imagined that, in the " present age, there was little risk of any controversy aris- " ing on theological subjects of such a speculative nature. " That the Bampton Vicar will have to contend with a " host of adversaries I doubt not, and I fear he will have " but few allies. But though Chester and all his bre- " thren should unite as one man, they will find it difficult, " I suspect, to bring any solid proof either from scrip- " ture, or Ante-Nicene antiquity, of the *essential* genera- " tion, which must be their sense of the *eternal*, other- " wise there is no dispute; or to support their belief of " the independent Deity (and if not independent, what is " it?) of the Logos upon that hypothesis. What you " mention of the Oxford gentleman, Mr. Hodson's per- " formance, gives me no great opinion of it, as I am at a " loss to know what use he can make of the passage in

" the Epistle to the Colossians (i. 15) which has been " claimed by the Arians as favouring their tenets. But I " most wonder at the weakness of *The British Critic*'s ob- " servations, all founded on assumptions, which are denied " by those who think with Mr. Hawtrey, and his laying " stress on the words of our Saviour in St. John xvii. 5, " which may be balanced by what he says in St Matt. " xxvi. 39—42. The hint you give about my offering some " assistance on the side of Mr. Hawtrey, I would most " readily comply with, if I knew in what sense he takes " the title λογος, whether in the neuter and passive sense " of *verbum*, or in the active sense which I would affix " to it of *Loquens*. Unless I knew this, I might perhaps " contradict some of his positions, and so do more harm " than good to the doctrine which he wishes to establish. " However, now that I have got to the end of my pleas- " ing labour on the 'Song of Songs,' I will revise, and " put into regular order, what I have formerly written " on the subject which you have started to me, and the " result of my fresh investigation of it shall be transmit- " ted to you, as my practice has long been,—to be dis- " posed of, as you may think proper."

Before Mr. Skinner had got his materials put together, according to the plan after which he wished to arrange them, an event occurred, which, though it did not repress the ardour of his exertions, yet served as a check to the rapidity with which they might otherwise have been carried forward. This was the death of Mr. Hawtrey, which being announced in the public papers, rendered it the less necessary to hasten the aid which his intend-

ed

ed auxiliary was desirous to furnish. There was now no pressing motive to accelerate the object he had in view. It was therefore pursued at leisure, and with all the necessary requisites of candour, caution, and mature deliberation. In this manner was the Author enabled, to compose what he called a "*Dissertation on the Trinity;*" and after the Manuscript had been perused with much satisfaction by many in Scotland, it was sent to England, and put into the hands of the same able and judicious Critics, who had examined the new version of the "Song of Solomon." Two of these worthy friends are since deceased, the Rev. Jonathan Boucher, Vicar of Epsom in Surry,* and William Stevens, Esq. Treasurer to Queen Anne's Bounty; a third, the Rev. George H. Glasse, Rector of Hanwell in Middlesex, is still alive, and by his permission, the following account is here inserted. In a Letter to Bishop Skinner at Aberdeen, dated at Epsom, 18th July, 1799, Mr. Boucher says—'I take it for granted, that Mr. Ste-
'vens has hardly forgotten to tell you the very high,
'though far from too high compliments paid by Mr.
'George Glasse to your excellent Father's *Dissertation*,
'and that in consequence of such a testimony in its fa-

 'vour,

* Mr. Boucher was author of "A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution, in Thirteen Discourses preached in North America, between the years 1763 and 1775—with an Historical Preface," giving a very clear and concise account of the separation of the Thirteen British Colonies in North America, from the parent state.—He was also preparing for the press a "Provincial Glossary," intended as a "Supplement to Dr. Johnson's Dictionary," when his lamented death deprived philologists of the gratification which they would otherwise have received from his unwearied labours in the field of Lexicography.

Of his excellent friend Mr. Stevens, some account will be given in the following pages of this Memoir.

'vour, it has been put into my hands to set the stile here 'and there a little to rights. For this liberty, I assure 'myself that neither you nor he will look for any apology. 'Any praise or any profit, that this world has to bestow, 'must be, and I dare say, are far beneath his regard: 'It will not, however be unpleasing to him to reflect 'that—" qualis ab incepto servetur ad imum," and that 'he will die as he has lived—doing good.'

The favourable testimony, here referred to, is in a Letter from Mr. Glasse to Mr. Stevens, dated June 27, 1799, every word of which he has since confirmed in the strongest terms: It is as follows:

'My dear Sir,

'I yesterday delivered to my Father,* Mr. Skinner's invaluable Manuscript. I declare solemnly, that 'considering the circumstances in which it was written, the age of the venerable Author, his remoteness 'from the ordinary materials of information, which access to public libraries may procure, the abstruse, and 'awful nature of his subject, and the ingenuity and specious sophistries of his opponents, I declare solemnly, 'that I believe the Manuscript in question, viewed in these 'lights, to be one of the most extraordinary efforts of the 'human mind which ever fell within my knowledge. I 'cannot afford to make the offer; but if I could, I should 'not hesitate one moment in making it my earnest and 'pe-

* The Rev. Dr. Glasse, Rector of Wansted, Essex, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty; author of "A Course of Lectures on the Holy 'Festivals," and other pious works.

'peculiar request to Mr. Skinner to be permitted to give 'the world his unanswerable arguments on the most in- 'teresting of all topics; and in so doing, I should think 'that I did God service, and promoted the knowledge of 'the truth, and its dispersion among mankind. Let me 'thank you, my dear Sir, to whom I doubtless am in- 'debted in the first instance, for the perusal of this ad- 'mirable work. If one part is more worthy of praise 'than another, it is the disquisition on the divine titles, 'יהוה, אדני, אלהים and אלוה.

'Yours ever most affectionately,

G. H. GLASSE.

It is a circumstance well known in the history of the Scotch Episcopal Church, that owing to the confusions of the times, and the various difficulties which she has had to encounter, there was no formal profession of faith required of those who were set apart to her ministry, farther than what is prescribed in the form of ordination made use of in that church. It was probably in consequence of this circumstance, that the Legislature, in passing the Act of Toleration in 1792, thought proper to insert a clause, requiring that every pastor, or minister, of the Episcopal persuasion in Scotland, shall subscribe a Declaration of his Assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. The manner, in which this requisition was enacted, made it difficult to determine what would be the most proper way of complying with it, and a few years elapsed before those concerned in it came to the unanimous resolution of exhibiting, as a public body, their sub-

subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and thereby adopting these Articles as the test or standard of the religious principles of the church to which they belonged.

In the mean time, some of the Bishops and clergy, well knowing Mr. Skinner's abilities for such a task, requested of him to draw up a Declaration of Faith, in a series of distinct articles, accompanied with such explanatory notes as might clearly shew their conformity to the purest standards of the primitive church, as well as to those of the present established church of England. This task Mr. Skinner executed in a manner highly satisfactory to those, who joined in the request that was made to him for that purpose. It is acknowledged by all who have seen and read his Manuscript, that such a complete system of theological instruction is rarely to be met with, especially on so small a scale, and laid down in such plain perspicuous language. To offer it therefore to the public as a part of his posthumous works, was a matter of obvious propriety. The only thing that required consideration was the particular form, in which it might appear to most advantage in the present publication. As the *Dissertation* on the Trinity already mentioned, and this *Declaration* of Faith now under notice, contained many remarks and inferences of similar import, such as tended to establish the same doctrine, and exhibit in much the same light the object, which both Manuscripts presented to the reader's attention, it was therefore judged expedient, in order to avoid needless repetition, to extract the substance of both, for the purpose of blending and incorporating it into one Tract, and thus giving it in the form most familiar

miliar to the Author, of "Letters to Candidates for Holy "Orders in the Episcopal Church of Scotland." The labour of transcribing, and thus moulding the subject into the shape proposed, was readily undertaken by Mr. Skinner at Forfar, who, it is hoped, will be found to have done justice to the design of both Manuscripts, and to have represented in their true light those sentiments of his learned Grandsire, with which he was so long and intimately acquainted.

It may now be expected, that some farther notice should be taken of the question put to Mr. Skinner by his friend Dr. Doig—"Are you not a Hutchinsonian?" It has been already seen, how this question was answered, and what were the sentiments entertained by Mr Skinner on some of those important points both in religion and philosophy, the representing which in a true light is the great object of what is peculiarly distinguished as *Hutchinsonian* doctrine. But as many of the readers of the present Memoir may be wholly unacquainted with the meaning of this mark of distinction, and with the character and qualifications of the person, whose opinions gave rise to it, such as wish for some farther information in these matters, will find a very concise but correct account of them towards the conclusion of the Second Volume of Mr. Skinner's Ecclesiastical History. It is there mentioned, that in the year 1748—"the philosophical and theo-"logical works of the late truly learned John Hutchinson, "Esquire, were published by Julius Bate, Rector of "Sutton in Sussex, and Robert Spearman, a gentleman "late of Corpus Christi College in Oxford." Mr. Hutchinson being a man of a studious turn of mind, assisted by

by proper education, had improved the opportunities which his station in life afforded, of making many valuable discoveries in the philosophy of nature, which he afterwards applied to theological disquisitions, and thereby had the pleasure to find an exact conformity between these two grand objects of human enquiry. From a long and laborious investigation of the Hebrew Scriptures, he discovered a solid foundation for establishing these sublime and most satisfactory truths—"That the stated operations of nature are carried on by the mechanism of the heavens, in their threefold condition of *Fire*, *Light*, and *Spirit*, or *Air*, the material agents set to work at the beginning:—That the heavens, thus framed by the Almighty wisdom, are an instituted emblem and visible substitute of *Jehovah Aleim*, the eternal Three, the co-equal, and co-adorable Trinity in unity:—That the unity of substance in the heavens points out the unity of essence, and the distinction of conditions the personality in Deity, without confounding the persons, or dividing the substance:—And, that from their being made emblems, they are called in Hebrew *Shemim*, the names, representatives, or substitutes, expressing by their names, that they are emblems, and by their condition or offices, what it is they are emblems of."

Truths of a like important nature he was enabled to draw from what he concluded to be the radical meaning of some capital words in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, in his opinion, the divine title *Elohim*, or *Aleim*, in English rendered *God*, refers to the solemn oath, or adjuration, by which the eternal covenant of grace among the adorable Three in Jehovah, was, and is confirmed. The word

word *Berith* usually translated *covenant* signifies rather— "He, or that, which purifies, and so points to the *Puri-* "*fier*, or covenant of purification, not *with* but *for* "man:" The *Cherubim*, which have been considered as a guard of angels to prevent all access to Eden, are, by his explanation of them, to be viewed as an emblematic figure of divine construction, to exhibit as far as any figure can be supposed to exhibit, the covenanted *Three* in Deity, and *man* united to the *redeeming* person: And thus explaining several other words of similar, though not quite so solemn, import, he drew this conclusion from the whole—"That all the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish "dispensation were so many delineations of Christ, in "what he was to *be*, to *do*, and to *suffer*; and that the "early Jews knew them to be types of his actions and suf- "ferings, and by performing them as such, were in so "far christians, both in faith and practice."

These are described by Mr. Skinner, as some of the principal outlines of Mr. Hutchinson's doctrines, which had been very happily illustrated, in some elaborate dissertations written by a person of great worth and eminence, the late Duncan Forbes of Culloden, Lord President of the Court of Session. Notwithstanding the countenance and approbation of so great and good a judge, the writings in question were treated by many with a degree of contempt, not easily to be accounted for, and which drew from Mr. Skinner the following very pertinent observation—"Without pretending to decide in "such a division of sentiment, it may be pronounced a "strange thing, that a serious respect to, and diligent "study of the language, in which Jehovah was pleased

"to reveal himself first to man, should be despised and "scoffed at by those who ought to know better, and that "too in an age, in which there are so many hostile "troops of dangerous errors set in battle-array against "the saving truths, and gracious promises delivered to "us in that language."*

Some years after the publication of his Ecclesiastical History, a circumstance occurred, which appears to have given Mr. Skinner no small offence, and to have excited in his mind a strong desire not only to avow once more his attachment to the Hutchinsonian principles, but also to point out to the notice of the public the rudeness and injustice with which these principles were sometimes treated by those who rejected them.† In a Letter on this subject,

* See his Ecclesiastical History, vol. II. p. 677.

† The circumstance here alluded to, was the following observation which appeared in the Encyclopædia Britannica, (vol. XIV. p, 61.) on the article *Paulianists*—"He" (Paulus Samosatenus) "may be considered as "the father of the modern Socinians, and his errors are severely condemned by the Council of Nice, whose Creed differs a little from that now "used, under the same name, in the Church of England. The Creed agreed upon by the Nicene Fathers, with a view to the errors of Paulus "Samosatenus, concludes thus—τους δε λεγοντας ην ποτε ουκ ην, και πριν "γενηθηναι ουκ ην, &c. τουτους αναθεματιζει η καθολικη και αποστολικη "εκκλησια—but those who say—he was, when he was not, and was not before he was born, the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes. To "those who have any veneration for the Council of Nice, this must appear a very severe, and perhaps not unjust censure of the modern Hutchinsonians, as well as of the Socinians."—And to those who have any veneration for truth, it must surely appear surprizing, that the Nicene Anathema in the case of the Paulianists, should ever have been extended to the "modern Hutchinsonians." For even according to his own interpretation,

ject, to his Son at Aberdeen, dated the 13th of February, 1795, he writes thus—'While such opponents as those 'I have alluded to, only sneer in a private way, at the 'peculiar tenets of the Hutchinsonians, and speak with 'contempt of their limited knowledge, and fanciful theo-'ries, I can, for the sake of peace, put quietly up with 'it, and neither trouble myself nor them about the mat-'ter. But when they attempt to expose, in such a public 'and blundering manner, what they really do not under-'stand, and will not take the trouble seriously to examine, 'I cannot so easily let pass such a wanton attack on a bo-'dy of men, whom I have been impelled by a sense of 'duty to esteem and admire, and on a system of doctrine, 'which, after long study, I am fully satisfied, is accord-'ing to truth and godliness.'

As one of the respectable body here alluded to, mention has already been made of the learned Lord President Forbes. Yet

tation, could the writer of this article possibly imagine that the Hutchinsonians say of the Son of God, "he was, when he was not, and was not "before he was born?" As he renders the first clause, it is nonsense, when connected with the second. The one is contradictory to the other: The first makes *for* the Socinians, and only the second *against* them. But neither can be applied to those, who believe the eternity of the redeeming Person in Jehovah, unless by making the Hutchinsonians say—"He was, "when he was not—the Son, and was not the Son πρὶν γενηθῆναι, &c. "before he was born,"—which was, no doubt, the sense intended to make it hit the Hutchinsonians; but how it can be equally levelled at the Socinians, it is difficult to comprehend. Yet it need excite no surprise, that such inaccuracies should creep into a work of so large extent as the Encyclopædia Britannica, and wherein so many hands were employed. The Editor, who could not be always on the spot to correct such mistakes, did not fail, however, with his usual candour, to make an apology for this strange blunder, as soon as it was pointed out to him.

" to reveal himself first to man, shoul[illegible] will appear
" scoffed at by those who ought to k[illegible], through ha-
" too in an age, in which there[illegible]dge of common
" troops of dangerous errors a[illegible], Horne produces
" the saving truths, and grac[illegible] University College
" us in that language."* [illegible]ded to read a little
[illegible]ystem of Hutchinson,

Some years after th[illegible]re some good things, and
History, a circumsta[illegible]—but *the man raves*, when he
given Mr. Skinner, [illegible]*al*, and *spirit*. Now," adds the
in his mind a st[illegible]n is to me a marvellous thing, that
his attachmen[illegible] in the chair of *Alfred*, should take
to point ou[illegible] of fire, light, and air, to be *raving*,
injustice w[illegible] ignorance, with a tallow candle in its hand, need
ed by t[illegible] it, to see them all at work together."*—
But

* "No man," adds Mr. Jones, "can draw a line between them, or say "where one ends, and another begins. But here they are certainly; for "without *air*, the candle goes out; without *fire* it will not burn us; and "without *light* we shall not see by it. And all this is no theory, but a "plain, undeniable matter of fact."—"The great agents in nature," says Mr. Parkhurst on the word כרב, in his Hebrew Lexicon, "are the fluid in "the heavens, or in other words, the *fire* at the orb of the sun, the *light* "issuing from it, and the *spirit* or *gross air* constantly supporting and con-"curring to the actions, and effects of the other two;—and thus the Per-"sons of the eternal THREE, and their œconomical offices and operations "in the spiritual, are represented by the three conditions of the celestial "fluid, and their operations in the material world." The foundation of this hypothesis however, it is thought, has been considerably weakened, if not completely demolished by some late discoveries in physical science; and a writer on the article *Cherubim* in the Encyclopædia Britannica (Supplement, vol. I. p. 406) observes that—"unfortunately for the reasoning of "Mr. Parkhurst, we are as certain, as we can be of any matter of fact, "that *fire* and *air* are not one substance,—that the gross air itself is com-"pounded of very different substances, and even *light* is a different sub-"stance from that which causes in us the sensation of heat, and to which "modern

nother Biographer, it seems, had said of Dr. Horne, if he supposed an analogy between material and rial things, and compared the agency of the of the Holy Ghost, to that of light and air in world, it would surely be thought, that he ry uncertain and fanciful, not to say, pre- grounds." On which Mr. Jones immedi- , in his lively manner.—"I thank him for speak- g out. But is this true divinity? Is there then no ana- "logy between things natural and divine? and have I been "beating the air, and writing a volume to prove and ex- "plain it, and demonstrate the great use and value of it; "and has this author discovered at last, that there is no "such thing? How mortifying is it to me to hear, that "so much of the labour of my life has been thrown a- "way? This analogy, which he will not suffer Bishop "Horne to *suppose*, without being *fanciful* and *presump-* "*tuous*, has been admitted, and insisted upon, as plain "and certain, by the best divines of the christian church, "who

"modern chemists have given the name of *Calorie*. We admit, that the "primary atoms of all matter *may be* substances of the very same kind, "though we do not *certainly know* that they are; but this makes nothing "for our author's hypothesis, because the sun and all the planets must, in "that case, be added to his one substance, which would no longer appear "under a triple form." All this *may be*, as here represented;—yet christians *certainly know*, that these *three* powers of nature, *fire*, *light*, and *air*, are applied in the holy scriptures to the Three Persons of the Divine Nature. "We are expressly taught, that *God is a consuming fire*, that "Jesus Christ is the *Light of the World*, and the Holy Ghost is called the "*Spirit*, after the name of the *air* or *wind*; for that is the meaning of the "word *Spirit*. Therefore God is *Fire*, God is *Light*, and God is *Spirit*." See this *Trinitarian Analogy* beautifully traced in the conclusion of the First Volume of the "*Theological, Philosophical*, and *Miscellaneous Works of* "*the Rev. William Jones, M.A. F.R.S.*

" who used it and admired it, because they found it in " the word of God; and it holds particularly in the two " great objects of nature, *air* and *light*, where this *mo-* " *dern* divine (for such I suppose him) cannot see it " himself, and will not permit us to see it without him."

It is to be feared, that there are many such modern divines to be found, notwithstanding the pains that were taken by Mr. Jones to set them right in the search of true knowledge, and the high estimation in which he was justly held, as " a man of quick penetration, of extensive " learning, and the soundest piety:"* to which might be added, a firmness of mind, or spirit of true christian fortitude, in maintaining what he believed to be truth, and defending it against any attack from the spirit of the times, aided by the force of prejudice, and a desire to fall in with the literary taste of the age. Had the same question which was put to Mr. Skinner, been addressed to Mr. Jones—Are you not a Hutchinsonian?—the following quotations from the Preface to the second edition of the life of Bishop Horne, will sufficiently shew what his answer would have been.

" In publishing the Memoirs of the Life of Bishop " Horne, my intention was only to give a true idea of " that good man, as it presented itself to my memory " and affections; and to produce an edifying book, ra- " ther than a formal history. I flatter myself it has done " some good, and I hope it may do more. If any of- " fence

* See Bishop Horsley's character of Mr. Jones, in a charge to the clergy of his diocese in the year 1800.

" fence has been given, I can only say, it was no part of
" my plan :—but it is a common fault with plain christi-
" ans, who know little of the world, to tell more truth
" than is wanted ; and they have nothing left but a good
" conscience, to support them under the mistake. Some
" few exceptions have been made to the performance by
" little cavillers, which are not worth mentioning : but I
" brought myself into the most serious difficulty of all,
" by representing Bishop Horne as an *Hutchinsonian ;*
" which thing, it seems, ought not to have been done ;
" as it was strongly suggested to me from the late learned
" *Doctor Farmer*, while my work was in hand. On this
" matter I beg leave to explain myself a little. I never
" said, nor did I ever think, that Bishop Horne owed e-
" very thing to Hutchinson, or was his implicit follower.
" I knew the contrary ;—but this I will say, because I
" know it to be true, that he owed to him the *beginning*
" of his extensive knowledge :—for such a beginning as
" he made placed him on a new spot of high ground,
" from which he took all his prospects of religion and
" learning ; and saw that whole road lying before him,
" which he afterwards pursued, with so much pleasure
" to himself, and benefit to the world. This declaration,
" however clear it may be to me, is more than some of
" my readers will be willing to admit, or able to bear.
" I perceive, by what has been written, that, if it can be
" effected, Bishop Horne must be taken away from the
" Hutchinsonians ; or if that cannot be done, his charac-
" ter must not be *set too high ;* we must beware of *exag-*
" *geration ;* he must be represented as *good* and *pious*,
" rather than *wise* or *great*. This comes not from the
" *truth*, but from the *times* ; and it is what we must
" ex-

" expect to hear, till the times shall alter, and a few " stumbling blocks shall be removed out of the way.—— " I would willingly have avoided a party *name*, being " conscious that I am not a party *man*, but dispos- " ed to exercise an independent judgment, and take " what is good and useful from every quarter where I " can find it; either for my own benefit, or that of the " public. If I can do good, I am willing to do it under " any character which an honest man may wear. But " my adversaries (who are not a few) have found such " an advantage for many years past, in giving me the " name of an *Hutchinsonian*, that they will never part " with it. So, as I am stamped with that name, I may " speak freely, without losing any ground. Too many " of the learned have shewn an unusual propensity, for " many years, to censure and reject every principle re- " ported to be *Hutchinsonian*, without first knowing " what it is, and what is to be said for it.—To prevent " which for the time to come, and to satisfy those, who, " having heard some things to perplex them, would be " glad of better information, I shall tell them, as well " as I can, what the principles really are, by which an " Hutchinsonian is distinguished from other men."

The writer of these just and lively remarks goes on with a fair and candid exhibition of that system of religious faith and philosophical opinion, which marks the peculiar character of the Hutchinsonian doctrine, and then adds—" There is nothing here that tends to make men " troublesome, as Heretics, Fanatics, Sectaries, Rebels, " or Corrupters of any kind of useful learning. All these " things a man may believe, and still be a good subject,

" a

" a devout christian, and a sound member of the Church
" of England; perhaps more sound and more useful
" than he would have been without them. For myself
" I may say (as I do in great humility) that by following
" them through the course of a long life, I have found
" myself much enlightened, much assisted in evidence
" and argument, and never corrupted as, I hope, my
" writings, if they should laste, will long bear me witness.
" If these principles should come into use with other
" people, I am confident they would turn christians into
" scholars, and scholars into christians, enabling them
" to demonstrate how shallow infidels are in their learn-
" ing, and how greatly every man is a loser by his igno-
" rance of revelation.——I hazarded a great, and, as it
" may be thought, a rash assertion,—when, I said, that
" if we were ever to see such another man as Bishop
" *Horne*, he must *come out of the same school!* I am
" still of the same mind; for, I think, no other school
" will form such a man. I will now hazard a farther
" opinion to the same effect; for, I think, it is not im-
" probable, that if some man were to arise, with abili-
" lities for the purpose, well prepared in his learning,
" and able to guide his words with discretion; and such
" a man were to take up the principles called Hutchinso-
" nian, and do them justice; the world would find it
" much harder to stand against them, than they are a-
" ware of, even with all the *new biographers* of the age
" to encourage and assist them. I may be called a *vision-*
" *ary* when I say this: that I cannot help. But how
" many stranger visions have been realized of late, which
" twenty years ago would have been pronounced utterly
" incredible! When strange things are to be done,

" strange men arise to do them. One man, as powerful " in truth, as Voltaire was in error, might produce very " unexpected alterations, and in less time than he did.— " Then might a new æra of learning succeed, as friendly " to the christian cause, as the learning, which has been " growing up amongst us for the last hundred years, has " been hostile and destructive. As to confirmed infideli- " ty, it is a deaf adder, never to be charmed. Yet even " here, the case is not always to be given up in despair. " Many forsake truth, because they hate it: of such there " is no hope. But some believe wrong, only because " they never were taught right."

With these striking sentiments did Mr. Jones conclude that excellent Preface to his life of Bishop Horne, on the perusal of which, and adverting particularly to the account given in it of what is called the Hutchinsonian system, a person was heard to say—" If *this* be *Hutchinso-* " *nianism*, it is only another name for *christianity in per-* " *fection.*" This circumstance is mentioned in a *Letter to a Friend*, published in 1800, in consequence of an attack that was made on Mr. Jones's Preface by a review of it in *The British Critic*, for February that year: And the author of the spirited reply was William Stevens, Esq. a gentleman well known as the bosom-friend and favourite, as well as near relation, of the venerable Bishop Horne, and to whom Mr. Jones addressed a Prefatory Epistle, as the person by whom he had been furnished with materials for his Life of that exemplary prelate.— This seems to be acknowledged in the following passage —" Surely the life of such a man ought not to be for- " gotten. You and I, who saw and heard so much of " it,

" it, shall, I trust, never recollect it, without being the " better for it; and if we can succeed in shewing it so " truly to the world, that they also may be the better for " it, we shall do them an acceptable service."

Such a warm appeal to the feelings of a pious and grateful heart will make the reader naturally expect to find in Mr. Stevens another pupil from the same school, which produced disciples so thoroughly instructed in the whole science of revealed truth, as were Bishop Horne and his biographer, Mr. Jones; and in this expectation no person who has read, or heard of the character and qualifications of Mr. Stevens, will run any risk of being disappointed. For, though not a divine by profession, yet was he deeply versed in all theological subjects, a biblical scholar of the first and soundest class, and so fully acquainted with every thing that pertained to the essence of true christianity, that a very learned prelate, the late Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, said of him once, on introducing him to a meeting of his clergy—" Here is a " man, who though not a Bishop among us, yet would " have been thought worthy of that character in the first " and purest ages of the christian church." That this tribute to his merit was no more than what his character justly deserved, is evident from a short account of it, which appeared in some of the periodical publications soon after his lamented death, which happened very suddenly in February 1807. His warm friend and admirer, James Allan Park, Esq. who, for eighteen years had been on the most intimate footing with him, drew up the biographical sketch, from which the following extracts are taken—

" Being nearly of the same age, as well as nearly con-
" nected, the late Bishop Horne and Mr. Stevens passed
" their early years at the same school at Maidstone in
" Kent, and that attachment, which was then formed,
" never ceased but with their lives; of which a stronger
" proof can hardly be given, than that the admirable
" ' Letters on Infidelity,' by the Bishop, were all address-
" ed to Mr. Stevens, under the initials of W. S. Esq.
" who appears by the Introductory Letter, to have given
" his relation the hints for that masterly production.—
" Separated in situation, and apparently in pursuits from
" his excellent relative, the congeniality of their minds
" however induced them to keep up a constant correspon-
" dence. Mr. Horne informed his friend of his course
" of studies, and Mr. Stevens devoted his leisure hours
" to the acquisition of the same branches of learning:
" And so assiduous was his application, that he acquired
" not only an intimate acquaintance with the French lan-
" guage, but also with the Greek and Hebrew;—nor
" was his learning confined to himself, or the circle of
" his friends. For at various periods he has produced
" some very able performances. In 1773 he published
" an ' Essay on the Nature and Constitution of the Chris-
" ' tian Church;' which excellent tract has gone thro'
" several editions, and is admitted into the Catalogue of
" the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.—
" This, and several other Pamphlets of his, were after-
" wards, at the solicitation of his friends, collected into
" a volume, which, with great humility, the author styl-
" ed Ουδενος Εργα—The Works of Nobody,—a name,
" by which he was afterwards known amongst his friends.
" On the much lamented death of the worthy Bishop
" Horne,

" Horne,—that great ornament of the Church of Eng-
" land, Mr. Stevens consoled himself, and soothed his
" afflicted mind, by presenting to the world the third
" and fourth volumes of the Sermons, and the volume
" of the ' Occasional Discourses,' of the venerable pre-
" late, and by supplying Mr. Jones with materials for his
" Life of the Bishop. His last concern with the press
" was in a uniform edition of Mr. Jones's Works, in
" twelve volumes, to which he prefixed a Life of that
" faithful servant of God, composed in such a style of
" artless and pathetic religious eloquence, as did no less
" honour to the deceased, than to the head and heart of
" the affectionate writer."

From several passages of the biographical memoir which Mr. Park thus justly characterizes, it may easily be discovered what answer Mr. Stevens would have given, had Dr. Doig's question been put to him—" Are you not
" a Hutchinsonian?" Having mentioned the " Full An-
" swer" written by Mr. Jones to Bishop Clayton's *Essay on Spirit;* in which answer " many curious and interest-
" ing questions are discussed, and several articles in the
" religion and learning of heathen antiquity are explained,
" particularly the Hermetic, Pythagorean, and Platonic
" Trinities," Mr. Stevens then adds the following just and pertinent remarks, sufficiently expressive of his own sentiments on the subject of these very " interesting ques-
" tions." ' The Bishop of Lincoln, (Dr. Pretyman) in
' his useful work called the Elements of *Christian Theo-*
' *logy*, quotes with approbation a long passage from Mr.
' Maurice's *Dissertation on the Oriental Trinities*, and
' observes, " that every friend to revealed religion will
" con-

" consider himself as indebted to his laborious research-
" es," which undoubtedly he must, " while every admi-
" rer of an animated and elegant stile, will read his works
" with peculiar satisfaction." What a pity, that his
' Lordship never fell in with the writings of Mr. *Hut-*
' *chinson!* Pleased as he is with Mr. *Maurice*, he must
' have rejoiced " in an opportunity of recommending, in
" the most earnest manner, the works of that author al-
" so (for matter, though not for stile) to the attention
" of all those who are desirous of seeing strong additional
" light thrown upon some of the most important doc-
" trines of the Holy Scriptures." He would there have
' seen not less clearly evinced than by Mr. Maurice, that
' the doctrine of the Trinity, so far from owing its origin
' to the philosophers of Greece, as infidels and sceptics
' assert, was the doctrine originally revealed to man;—
' that, from the beginning, all true believers worshipped
" one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither con-
" founding the persons, nor dividing the substance."—
' He would there have seen, what Mr. Jones so fully de-
' monstrates in this tract; that " the kind of Trinity ac-
" knowledged by the pagan nations of antiquity," the
' heathens, who *knew not God*, was not, could not be,
' a " Trinity in the divine nature," the *sacred Trinity*,
' *Jehovah Elohim*, the *God they did not like to retain in*
' *their knowledge*, but a *physical Trinity*, that which *by*
' *nature is not God.* He would have seen, that the
' works of heathen antiquity, and classical literature, are
' rendered abundantly more interesting and useful from
' the view which Mr. *Hutchinson* has given of the doc-
' trines and rites of heathen idolatry, which he has traced
' backwards into the most remote antiquity. The New

' Tes-

'Testament tells us of the heathens in general, that 'they worshipped the creature. Accordingly Mr. *Hutchinson* hath shewn, that the most ancient names of the 'gods of the Gentiles denote some or other of the pow-'ers of the natural creation, either the sun, or the moon, 'the air, fire, &c.; that the attributes of these were the 'attributes of their deities; and the rites and ceremonies 'performed in their worship were emblematic of their 'operations. He hath shewn, that as the whole ritual 'and ceremonies of sacrificature amongst the heathens 'were not from nature, but from the perversion of sa-'cred tradition, so their image-worship was from the 'same original, having been derived from the symbolical 'capacity and use of the cherubic figures, first set up at 'the east of Eden, and afterwards in the Tabernacle 'and Temple: That from what is said in the prophets, 'and in the law, and in the New Testament, it is suffi-'ciently clear, that the animals in that mystical figure 'had relation to the divine Persons in the Godhead, and 'to the elementary powers of nature, on which account 'the heathens in their worship of nature, retained it, and 'added to it in many ways, some of them monstrously 'profane and absurd.* By considering what species of 'animals were chiefly used in image-worship by the hea-'thens, with the sense and meaning of them, and then 'comparing what was there found, after the manner of 'Mr. *Hutchinson*, with what the Scripture hath deliver-'ed concerning the cherubim, his Lordship would see 'such a scene of divinity, philosophy, and heathen my-'tho-

* See Parkhurst's elaborate Remarks on this subject in his Hebrew and English Dictionary—Article כרב.

'thology opened before him, as could not fail to capti-
'vate his understanding, and perhaps induce him to say,
'as Mr. Jones was wont to say—that "he would not for
'the world but have met with Mr. *Hutchinson*'s works."

Who could wish for a stronger testimony in favour of the Hutchinsonian system, than what is here afforded by one who had long made the study of it his delight, and was never known to delight in any thing but what he knew to be just and right? Drawing to the conclusion of what he had to say of his learned friend Mr. Jones, and mentioning the Preface to the second edition of his Life of Bishop Horne, as "containing a concise, but clear exposi-
"tion of the leading opinions entertained by Mr. *Hutchin-*
"*son* on certain interesting points in theology and philoso-
"phy," Mr Stevens impresses on the minds of his readers the consideration both of the merits of the *Preface*, and the character of the *Bishop*, in these few forcible terms—
"Somehow or other it has been the fashion with some
"people to speak slightingly of the work; but for what
"reason, who can guess? It was industriously reported
"indeed that the Bishop had long renounced Hutchinso-
"nianism; and perhaps the retailers of the report are
"induced to depreciate the performance, being displea-
"sed to see it proved in the *Life*, that his sentiments on
"this important subject were unchanged——'thus say-
"'ing, thou reproachest us.' Though, why there should
"be any wish to take away the good Bishop from the
"Hutchinsonians, one cannot tell; unless allowing him
"to be one—a character no less wise and great, than
"good and pious—should seem to imply, as it really
"does, that the *thing*, if every where spoken against

"(as

" (as christianity itself was at first) is spoken against " falsely."

In the same page which contains this decided opinion on the point in question, Mr. Stevens mentions having received a Letter from a Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, from which he quotes a passage respecting Mr Jones's Life of Bishop Horne, and in the answer to this Letter Mr. Stevens writes thus :—' As you are delighted ' with the Biographer's account of the good Bishop's ' Hutchinsonianism, I am equally delighted with what ' you have said on the subject, and shall make a trans- ' cript of it, to bind up with the *Life*. But though you ' and I are pleased with the performance, and it is gene- ' nerally liked, there are various opinions about it, and ' by particular people it is disapproved. Some think, as ' our good friend Mr. Parkhurst for instance, there is too ' little Hutchinsonianism in it, and others, with the gen- ' tlemen of Oxford, think there is too much. But Mr. ' Jones says—' What should he have been without these " doctrines, and what would the Bishop have been with- " out them? It is not villainy,' says he, ' in other people " to give up them *for us*, but it would be so in us, and " therefore,' continues he, ' with *reformed* Hutchinso- " nianism I will live and die."

From the account that has been now given of the opinions generally considered as peculiar to Mr. Hutchinson, the intelligent reader will see no cause to apprehend any danger, from the nature and tendency of them, to the cause of revealed truth; and when he knows also, that these opinions were warmly espoused, and ably defended

'thology ... distinguished characters of the
'vate hi... particularly by a Bishop, Priest,
'as Mr ... church, so eminent for their learn-
'the ... admired for their piety and worth,

W ... Horne, the Rev. William Jones, of Nay-
the ... William Stevens, Treasurer to Queen Anne's
or ... reflecting on what has now been said of their
w ... and quoted from their writings, the unpreju-
... reader will be ready to acknowledge, that Mr.
Skinner had no cause to be ashamed of avowing himself
a Hutchinsonian, or to retract his favourable opinion of
those who were called by that name, as "a body of men,
"whom he was impelled by a sense of duty to esteem
"and admire."

It was, no doubt, an impulse of the same kind which induced the writer of an account of Bishop Horne, in the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica,* after giving the good Bishop credit for renouncing his prejudice against the Newtonian Philosophy, to add—that "he con-
"tinued indeed to study the Hebrew scriptures on the
"plan of Mr. Hutchinson, unncumbered with the Ma-
"soretic Points, and the fruits of his studies are in the
"hands of the religious public, in works, which, by
"*that* public, will be esteemed as long as their language
"is understood." This was the plan, which Mr. Skinner admired and followed in all his scriptural studies: And if, for adhering to this plan, he was to be held up to the notice of the public, and to the scorn of many, by the party title of *Hutchinsonian;* although the giving such

* See vol. I. of the Supplement, p. 747.

such party names was a practice below his censure, and he would have wished, with honest Mr. Jones, to "avoid" such silly marks of distinction, yet the motives, by which he was influenced, raised him as far above the folly of being ashamed of an appellation, which, if its meaning be understood by those who use it, must be considered as pointing to the true knowledge of the holy scriptures, even the *Old Testament* scriptures, "which "were able to make men wise unto salvation, through "faith which is in Christ Jesus."* This was the *wisdom*, the *love* and pursuit of which, in Mr. Skinner's opinion, constituted true *philosophy*; and therefore the philosophical view, which Mr. Hutchinson's writings gave of the system of nature, he contemplated with that satisfaction which arose from beholding how wonderfully it was subservient to the elucidation of the christian scheme of salvation. Such was the light, in which he always wished to represent the great truths so happily discovered by the study of the Hebrew language, in its pure and primitive

 form;

* 2 Tim. iii. 15. This was said by St. Paul of his young disciple Timothy, who yet had only the advantage of so much of the sacred writings as was extant in his time, and that was certainly no more, at least when he was "a child," than the scriptures of the Old Testament, the law and the prophets, to which our Saviour so often directed the Jews, as bearing evident testimony to him. "Search the scriptures," said he, meaning what was written by Moses and the prophets, "for they are they that testify of "me." And for this the people of Berœa were greatly commended, because they searched the scriptures, whether the things advanced by the apostles were so. Hence it is evident, that the people so directed and commended, were capable of understanding, and being made wise, by, not only the plain doctrines and laws of the Old Testament, but even what are thought the more obscure and intricate parts of it, the types and prophecies relating to the Messiah, and all pointing to the "faith which is in "Christ Jesus."

form; and as it was justly said of Bishop Horne, so without fear of contradiction, it is hoped his Biographer may say of Mr. Skinner, that the fruits of his studies are and will be "in the hands of the religious public, in works "which by *that* public will be esteemed, as long as their "language is understood."

Indiscriminate, or general praise, is an object never thought of by an author, who writes neither for fame nor profit; and such an author was Mr. Skinner. Should it therefore be urged, that the representing him as zealous for the propagation of what are contemptuously called *Hutchinsonian* tenets, will not tend to his credit or reputation in the literary world, this is an argument, which, it is well known, would have had no weight with him, nor been in the smallest degree regarded by him. Some of his friends or connections may wish it had been otherwise, but those who have the charge of recording his sentiments, and embalming his memory, must speak of him as he was, and not pretend to hold up to remembrance a character, which in him never existed.

From the high terms of approbation, in which Mr. Skinner was accustomed to express himself with respect to the Hutchinsonian discoveries, some of his acquaintances were almost led to suspect, that in his opinion there was hardly any such thing as christian truth to be seen in the world, at least, in the latter ages of it, till brought to light by the writings of Mr. Hutchinson. Were it then to be supposed, that some ground had been given for ascribing such an opinion to Mr. Skinner, though only in the limited sense, which his expressions could possibly ad-

admit, it should also be remembered, that something of a similar kind has been applied to another famous character, and surely with as little strictness of propriety as in the case now referred to. For if Mr. Skinner was worthy of censure for making some people only *almost* suspect, that he gave undue merit to the *light* produced by the philosophical and theological writings of Mr. *Hutchinson*, what shall be thought of the poet who, without any restriction or limitation, said of his great rival, the philosophic *Newton*—

> " Nature, and nature's laws lay hid in night.—
> " God said,—Let Newton be, and *all* was light!"

It is well observed by an eminent writer, and no less sound divine of the Church of England, that, " whilst " man continues in his present state of imperfection, there " will be a diversity of opinions, and a diversity of opini- " ons must occasionally give rise to disputes and divi- " sions. These, as the beginning of evils, ought to be " avoided, so far as may be consistent with a proper re- " gard for truth."* It is equally evident, however, that this due and becoming regard for truth, the " truth as it " is in JESUS," cannot, on some occasions, be more properly expressed, than in clearly shewing, and firmly maintaining the ground on which it rests. Such an occasion was presented by a circumstance which, a few years ago, brought into Mr. Skinner's neighbourhood a strange display of those " new lights," that distinguish the modern missionary system of true, evangelical preaching.

In

* See the beginning of the First Letter in Mr. Daubeny's " Appendix " to the Guide to the Church."

In the large and populous parish of Old Deer, immediately adjoining to that of Longside, there had been a numerous Episcopal Congregation for several years, under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Mr. Livingston, who, previous to his death in 1751, made an earnest request to his intimate friend Mr. Skinner, the Episcopal Clergyman nearest to Old Deer, that he would be as assistant as possible to the congregation there, and do all he could to keep them stedfast in the communion of the Scotch Episcopal Church, to which, both from principle, and family connexion, Mr. Livingston himself was zealously attached, and had been at great pains to train up his people in the same attachment. In compliance therefore with his dying request, as soon as the vacancy happened, Mr. Skinner, by authority of the Bishop of the diocese, performed divine service, and other occasional offices, to the congregation at Old Deer, till another plan was suggested for their supply, and he was completely prevented from continuing his services, by being committed to prison, in the manner already mentioned. Thus disappointed in the hope of any farther assistance from him, some of them from choice, and others from what they termed necessity, acquiesced in the proposal of inviting an English ordained Clergyman to come, and settle among them, which settlement accordingly took place before the six months of Mr. Skinner's confinement elapsed, and he ever after remained a quiet spectator of the unhappy effects produced by it.

On the prospect, however, of another vacancy being likely to happen, he was induced, at the distance of no less than forty-six years, to address a "Letter to the con-

"gre-

" gregation of the chapel at Old Deer," as from an " Old Friend," expostulating with them on the irregularity of their ecclesiastical situation; shewing how lame and defective it was in many important points, and earnestly recommending a return to the communion of the only regular Episcopal Church in this part of the kingdom, as the obvious means of getting these defects supplied, and themselves restored to their proper character, as an Episcopal Congregation. This Letter was printed, and circulated among them, and had its designed effect on a few of those, for whose instruction and benefit it was sincerely intended. But the greater number seemed to think it unworthy of their regard, and influenced, no doubt, by various motives, which yet ought to have no weight in matters of spiritual concern, they resolved to continue in a state of separation from the Scottish Episcopacy, and with that view, procured as an assistant and successor to their dying pastor, a Clergyman from England, who, though really ordained in the English Church, soon shewed, both by his principles, and practice, that he had brought little or nothing with him peculiar to that church, but his Letters of Orders.

In a short time after his settlement at Old Deer, he was at pains to circulate in that neighbourhood a small Tract, called " A plain Account of Conversion," containing such a mass of wild, unsound doctrine, as alarmed Mr. Skinner for the safety of the weaker part of his own charge, and made him provide an antidote for the poison thus artfully conveyed, which he published in 1799, under the title of " Some plain Remarks on a plain Ac- " count of Conversion, now in circulation through the " pa-

" parish and neighbourhood of Old Deer."—These Remarks were introduced in the following manner—" The " writer of this little piece puts his name to it, William " Ward, M. A. and styles himself, late Curate of Carlton, " &c. in Norfolk," which indicates him to *have been* a ' Clergyman of the Church of England, as by law esta- ' blished. From this curacy, however, he has, by his ' own account, been *forced* to remove, which, he says, ' in his introductory advertisement, " he did very reluc- " tantly, contrary to his determination not to quit his " sphere of usefulness, so long as he could be *permitted* " to continue in it: And again he mentions the late oc- " casion, when it pleased God to *permit* our separation." ' But he has not directly told us what was the cause of ' that separation, though, no doubt, the good people of ' Carlton, to whom he addresses this publication, knew ' what was the cause, which *forced* him to leave them. ' But his readers here are left to guess at it, from what ' he afterwards says—" I address also those who were " the *opposers* of my ministry, convinced, my friends, " that your objections were more against the *power* and " *practical* influence of *my* preaching, than against the " doctrines," &c.: and what these doctrines were, he ' had told before, where he " blesses God, who enabled " and taught him to embrace this view of divine truth " called Calvinistic, &c."

Having thus discovered Mr. Ward's " *Calvinistic* " *View*," which surely the Church of England neither embraces, nor requires her clergy to defend, Mr. Skinner is next led to contemplate the labours of the " *Mis-* " *sionary Society*," which, according to Mr. Ward, are in-

intended to "promote the glorious cause of making the "gospel enlighten many *benighted* countries;"—and in regard to which the 'Remarker' very justly observes—'I do not mean to derogate from what praise may be 'justly due to the alleged *piety* of this design, which 'yet, like many other good designs, may be spoiled in 'the execution. I only wish, that the encouragers of it had 'not adopted the word "*Missionary*," as there is some-'thing more sacred and solemn in the word "mission," 'when relative to this business, than upon strict exami-'nation will be found to quadrate fully with their charac-'ter. The writer under my immediate consideration has 'adorned his title page with two texts, one of which is 'Rom. iv. 3. "What saith the scripture?" Now the 'scripture saith, and in the same Epistle too, chap. x. 15. "How shall they preach, unless they be sent?" Which 'will immediately carry up the inquisitive mind to the 'original *Sender* (St. John xx. 21) and to his appointed 'delegates in regular succession: A privilege, which, 'there is ground to suspect, will cost the "formers of "this Society" more pains than they are aware of, to 'press into their service. This is a *volunteering* age in 'more respects than one. But as in defence of the state 'the warmest fervour of patriotic zeal does not entitle 'our military volunteers to *act* openly in the common 'cause, till they are regularly embodied, and *sent* whi-'ther proper authority directs them, so it were not amiss 'that the church *militant* should observe the same order, 'and have something at least of an authoritative commis-'sion from the Commander-in-Chief, the great Captain 'of our salvation, to shew for their warrant, and to give 'their labours a proper effect.'

After thus viewing the general aspect of the performance before him, Mr. Skinner proceeds 'to consider 'more particularly the Author's account of *conversion*, 'and of the experience of newly converted persons, with 'what he says of his own strugglings, convictions, pray-'ings, &c. the effects of having the mind fed and com-'forted with the Rev. Mr. Newton's Cardiphonia and 'Hymns.' On all which Mr. Skinner very properly remarks—'I would not wish to be misunderstood on a sub-'ject of so high importance as the conversion of a sinner, "so warmly recommended, and so sufficiently described "in scripture." I would only have the word properly 'explained, and as properly applied, which is seldom the 'case in any of the fine encomiums upon it, and in this 'plain account of it as little as in any I have ever seen. 'Much indeed is always said of the "experiences" of 'newly converted persons, and I should be the last man 'upon earth to speak openly against, or even lightly a-'bout, them. But it should be remembered that one 'person's experiences, however certain and pleasing to 'himself, are not, and indeed cannot be a fixed standard 'by which to direct or judge of another's. Yet in many 'of the descriptions which we meet with of conversion, it 'is held out to us as something of the nature of an elec-'trical stroke, instantaneous, and wrought in a moment, 'and consequently *alike* in all converts, both in its ope-'ration and effects. I can admit, that where divine wis-'dom pitches upon an instrument for future, and extra-'ordinary service, as in the case of St. Paul, such a sud-'den stroke may have been given, and an instantaneous 'change wrought. But in the ordinary economy of 'grace, and among the generality of converts, these mi-

'ra-

'raculous interpositions are not to be expected, because 'not promised, and the making a general rule of them 'without distinction, may be productive of most perni-'cious consequences. We rejoice in the "conversion "of sinners," in the christian sense of the expression, 'and we believe and feel it to be a progressive and re-'peated work, indeed the whole business of our lives, 'begun to us, and carried on in us by (what Mr. Ward 'has not been taught by the Church of England to ridi-'cule, however much his friends may do so) the *means* '*of grace*, which, as giving us the *hope of glory*, it is 'at least as safe to ourselves, and as respectful to their '*Institutor*, to trust to for *conversion*, as to "inward "*strugglings*," or declamatory harangues, under the 'specious title of preaching the gospel. To spread or 'preach the gospel has indeed of late years become a fa-'vourite topic with a certain class of people, who would 'fain have it believed, that without them there would be 'no more gospel in Britain, than among the wildest In-'dians. To propagate this idea seems to be the great de-'sign of that missionary scheme, which is now so much 'extolled among those who are fond of such novelties, 'especially when introduced and supported with a degree 'of zeal and fervour that can hardly fail to obtain popu-'larity, and make the object of this boasted *mission* be 'received as gospel from such laborious and powerful 'preachers. All this proceeds from those mistaken no-'tions which now prevail respecting the original commis-'sion given to our Lord's apostles, and from the peculiar 'stress which is too commonly laid on what is vaguely 'denominated "preaching the gospel," as if that compre-'hended the whole of the ministerial office. The word

"gospel," as applied in scripture, properly signifies "*good news*," the glad tidings of salvation * to a benighted 'world, which they could know nothing of till they *heard* 'it, and how could they hear without a preacher? The first '*commissioned* preachers therefore of this "good news" 'might justly be called *preachers* of the gospel, because 'they were, what the original word for *preacher* properly 'signifies, the royal *Heralds* who first *proclaimed* the king's 'gracious pardon to rebellious mankind. But now in those 'happy lands, to which the sound of this original pro-'clamation has reached, all they have to do, who are re-'gularly *sent* as ministers of Christ, is to put people in '*mind* of the gracious pardon which he has purchased for 'them, to explain the terms and conditions on which it is 'held out to them, and, as "stewards of the mysteries of 'God," to administer those instituted means of grace, 'by which mankind may be enabled to enjoy the benefits 'of this merciful dispensation. All this should be care-'fully attended to, in every thing connected with the 'great business of the gospel; and it were well, if these 'zealous, self-constituted "*preachers*" of it, would tell 'us what they mean by the *gospel*; because St. Paul sup-'poses,† that another, or different gospel from what he 'delivered, *may* be preached, and to which, though 'coming from an angel, he affixes a dreadful censure.— 'I am led into this observation, from what some of these 'missionary preachers have lately told us,‡ "that the "gospel of Jesus is almost unknown in many parts of the "country, and little better than heathen morality sub-"stituted

* Isaiah lii. 7. † Gal. i. 8, 9.

‡ See their printed Tour, p. 15.

" stituted for the *doctrines* of Christ;" a charge, which, ' whatever had been their inclination, they certainly had ' not time nor opportunity to make good. I am as much ' against what is no better than " heathen morality," as ' any missionary can pretend to be. But is there not a ' gospel morality? And has not Jesus issued out *com-* ' *mandments* for his ministers to *teach*, as well as doc- ' trines for them to *preach?* And what are these doc- ' trines, so much, and so vauntingly in these peoples' ' mouths? Is the doctrine of the author now before me ' the only doctrine, or, I may say, any doctrine at all of ' Jesus? We find Jesus himself telling us,* that he came ' to seek and to save that which was *lost*. Were the elect ' lost; or was he sent to reprobates? These jarring ap- ' pearances need reconciliation, and it lies upon the ad- ' mirers of the " Calvinistic view," to attempt it. It ' was the great St. Augustine of Hippo, that first opened ' up this view in the Latin Church, for in the Greek ' Church it had never been seen. And Mr. Ward must ' know what opposition it met with even in Augustine's ' time, to such a degree, that it was reckoned a heresy, ' which, the veneration for that great man led its impug- ' ners to say, had originated " ex Augustini verbis " male intellectis," from misunderstanding Augustine's ' words, which indeed seems to have been the case. It ' is well known what a flame this " view of divine truth" ' raised in the Gallican Church, four hundred years after ' Augustine's death, on account of a silly monk, Gode- ' scale, who screwed it up to the highest pitch of mo- ' dern acceptation, and had both supporters and oppo- ' nents,

* St. Luke, xix. 10.

'nents, men of equal eminence in the church, and of 'equal reputation for piety and learning. Even after 'Calvin, among his other singularities, had broached it 'anew, and his Genevan successor Beza had continued 'to hold it up in its present supra-lapsarian shape, it was 'attacked by Jacob Van Harmin, the much spoken of 'Arminius, then public Professor of Divinity in the Uni-'versity of Leyden, and the attack carried on after his 'death by his followers, who, though borne down by 'the civil power, not by theological argument, in the 'Dutch Synod of Dort, have still, under the appellation 'of *Remonstrants*, kept their ground to this day, as far 'as such things are minded, or thought worth the mind-'ing, in that country *now*.

'It is not before me at present to debate this "Calvin-"istic view," in that striking feature of it, which Mr. 'Ward is so particularly fond of, but only to observe, 'that where the foundation is so manifestly, and at the 'same time so justly contestible, the superstructure can-'not be so solid as to be safely trusted in: And to put 'him in mind of the modesty of his mother-church of 'England on this dark and dangerous point, with her 'necessary caution in the conclusion of her XVII. Ar-'ticle, which none of her sons need, and no *true* son of 'hers will, I hope, be ashamed to follow.' Indeed, as Mr. Skinner afterwards justly observes, on the subject of an absolute, unconditional decree of election and repro-bation, as maintained by the Calvinists—"The Church 'of England teaches no such thing; her prayers and 'collects all tend the other way; and her motherly in-'structions to her young members impress their tender

'minds

'minds with the comfortable belief, that "God the Son "hath redeemed *me* and *all* mankind." *Universal re-* 'demption therefore, however hateful to, and destructive 'of, the "Calvinistic view," is the avowed doctrine of 'the Church of England, founded upon, and drawn from 'scripture. The objections to it,' as Mr. Skinner very properly remarks, 'arise from not duly distinguishing 'between *redemption* and *salvation*,' a distinction which he thus illustrates—'The deliverance of the Israelites out 'of Egypt has been called a redemption,* and has been 'thought not only analogous to, but likewise typifying 'of, the great redemption wrought by the death of 'Christ, upon the footing of the apostle's application, '(1 Cor. x. 1—13) where, after telling those he wrote 'to, that "all our fathers were baptized unto Moses in "the cloud and in the sea, and did *all* eat the same spi-"ritual meat, and did *all* drink the same spiritual drink; "for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed "them, and *that Rock was Christ;*" he immediately 'adds—"but with *many* of them God was not pleased, "for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Now 'here is an exact parallel to the case before us. Here is 'universal redemption, and but partial salvation, the 'causes of which are specified in the 7th, 8th, 9th, and '10th verses; and to bring all home to our christian 'case, the apostle twice (verses 6th and 11th) calls these 'things "types" to us, and says they were written 'for our admonition, in this particular point among ma-'ny others—"Let him that thinketh he *standeth*, take "heed lest he fall." (verse 12th) Can any one desire a "clearer

* Exod. vi. 6. Deut. vii. 8.

'clearer illustration of the subject in hand, or wish for a 'more satisfying solution of this difficulty, so artfully 'raised about universal redemption, than the draught 'which the apostle has here laid before us? But the mis-'fortune is, that a prevailing attachment to systems of 'modern composition has brought on, I shall not say a 'total rejection, but at least a strange forgetfulness, of the 'scripture system of christianity, which yet all join in ac-'knowledging to be the true one. Certain it is, that 'scripture declares christianity to be a great mystery, 'founded in general on the mysterious doctrine of a Tri-'nity of Persons (Aleim) in one Jehovah, and in parti-'cular on "God (one of these persons) manifested in "flesh," and so become Christ, from whom this myste-'rious system has received its sacred appellation.* It de-'clares farther, that the salvation of man is a preconcert-'ed scheme of love and mercy,† by the eternal covenant 'in, and of Jehovah, not *with* but *for* man; and it ex-'presses, in terms sufficiently adequate to our weak ca-'pacities, the several parts which the Three Great Ones, 'and man too, as the happy *object* of all, have to act in 'this blessed scheme; as it is compendiously delineated 'by a venerable father of the primitive church, good old 'Irenæus of Lyons—"the *Spirit* operating, the *Son* ad-"ministering, the *Father* approving, *man* consummat-"ing unto salvation."‡ And again—"The *Father* well "pleased, the *Son* administering, and forming, the *Spi-"rit* nourishing and increasing, *man* himself gradual-"ly profiting, and attaining towards perfection."‖—

'Such

* Acts xi. 26. † Titus i. 2. ‡ Book iv. ch. 37.

‖ Chap. 75.

'Such is the scripture representation of this beautiful 'plan:' And with this striking description of it may now be closed the extracts that have been given from Mr. Skinner's "Plain Remarks;" of which no higher commendation needs be offered than the approbation bestowed on them, and the use made of them, by the very learned author of the "Guide to the Church," who, in his Appendix to that excellent work, has interwoven with his own admirable reasoning, several passages from Mr. Skinner's little Tract, and particularly the last quotation that has been made from it.* The author could not have received a more gratifying proof of the soundness of his arguments, and their evident conformity to that sacred code of instruction, which gives us all our knowledge of divine things, than finding them thus sanctioned and adopted by so able a divine, and so good a judge of reasoning, as Mr. Daubeny.

Before dismissing the subject of Mr. Ward's "Plain "Account of *Conversion*," some notice ought to be taken of the manner in which he thought proper to exemplify his doctrine. *Converted* first of all from that dark and dismal state of error in which lies the "benighted" Church of England, he was enlightened by the "Calvin-"istic view of divine truth," which seemed for a while to shew him all that was necessary to his salvation. "But "before he was forced" from his charge at Old Deer, as he had been before from his curacy at Carleton, another *conversion* took place, and from being an enlighten-

* See Mr. Daubeny's *Appendix to the "Guide to the Church"*—pages 196 and 197, 603, 604, 605, and 606, 622, 623, and 624.

ed *Calvinist*, he became, both in principle and practice, a zealous *Anabaptist!* Such glaring deviations, both from the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, could hardly fail to excite in the minds of those, who had chosen Mr. Ward for their pastor, some suspicions about their safety in following such a bewildered wandering guide; and the consequence was, his dismissal from an office, the duties of which, from his frequent turnings and windings, he seemed very unfit to discharge.

The circumstance of calling such a clergyman to any congregation professing to be *Episcopal*, and being so soon obliged to dismiss him as unworthy of his station, is here mentioned with no other view, than to shew the folly and danger of employing, in so important a business as the work of the ministry, strangers wholly unknown to the parties concerned, and the recommendations in whose favour are supported by no authority, and without imposing on the persons granting them any thing like official responsibility. It might surely be hoped that the disappointments of this kind which have been frequently experienced by congregations in this country, calling themselves of the Church of England, would lead such congregations seriously to enquire into the real nature of their relation to that distant, though Episcopal, Establishment, and whether it would not be more convenient, as well as more consistent with their profession, to be connected with an *Episcopal* church at home, acknowledged to be pure and primitive in all her administrations, and ever anxious to provide with proper pastors the several parts of that "little flock," which the great Almighty Shepherd has still preserved in the remains of what was once

the

the Established Church of this part of the United Kingdom.

As a zealous and indefatigable labourer in this small portion of the christian vineyard, some account has now been given of the person, whose literary life and character form the subject of the present Memoir, and of whom it may justly enough be said, that "being dead, he yet "speaketh" for himself in his writings, better than any living friend can speak for him.* A similar observation was made respecting that eminently learned divine of the Church of England, the late Rev. William Jones of Nayland, the latter part of whose valuable life was attended by some affecting circumstances, that bore a striking resemblance to the sufferings of Mr. Skinner in his declining years. "In the year 1799," says the writer of Mr. Jones's Life,† "the sorrows of his heart were (great-

* How anxious he was, that his life might not be extended beyond his ability to labour in his MASTER's service, may be seen in the following lines, extracted from a Letter written by him on his reaching that period, when, the Psalmist says, "the strength of men is but labour and sorrow"—

Ante tamen quam pigra vetet prodesse senectus,
Officio tandem non satis apta sacro,
Ante meis quam sim gravis, aut onerosus amicis,
Decrepitosque annos desidiosus agam,
Deserat O! validos validus mihi spiritus artus,
Maturetque obitum Parca benigna meum!

† See page lii. of the "Life of the Author," prefixed to his works, and page lx. where he thus pours forth his soul in a Letter to his intimate friend Dr. Glasse—"I have found it pleasant in time past to *do the work of God*, "to demonstrate his wisdom, and to defend his truth, to the hazard of my "quiet, and my reputation. But, O, my dear friend, I never knew till

"now

" ly) enlarged. That year began with a severe trial, " the irreparable loss of the careful manager of his fa- " mily, and all his worldly affairs, his almoner, his " counsellor, his example, his companion, his best " friend, his beloved wife, with whom he had lived in " sweet converse for near half a century—

———" O! the tender ties
" Close twisted with the fibres of the heart!
" Which broken,—break them,—and drain off the soul
" Of human joy, and make it pain to live—
" And is it then to live?—When *such* friends part,
" 'Tis the survivor dies!"

Before the end of the same year 1799, Mr. Skinner also lost his beloved partner, who had lived with him nearly eight years *more* than half a century; and no words more expressive of his feelings can possibly suggest themselves to his Biographer, than those used by Mr. Jones on the like melancholy occasion, " that, when dear friends " have lived to their age, it signifies little which of them " goes first;—yet, alas! she was so helpful, and he so " helpless, she so good, and he so weak, his memory " brought more distress than comfort." It was under the pressure of this heavy distress, that he committed to writing the following beautiful lines, so tenderly descriptive of the qualities, which adorned his beloved partner, and so mournfully expressive of the loss he had sustained by the removal of such a dear companion;—

Heu!

" now what it was to *suffer the will* of God, although my life has never been " long free from great trials and troubles. Neither was I sensible of the " evil of Adam's transgression, till it took effect upon the life of my blessed " companion, of whom neither I nor the world was worthy."

Heu! tandem divulsa mihi suavissima CONJUX,
Chara mihi in vivis, mortua chara mihi;
Quam pulchram juvenis juvenem peregrinus amavi,
Quam colui vetulus mutuo amore senem!—
Heu! quot portasti mecum, sine murmure, casus!
Heu! quoties pro me triste doloris onus!
Tu mihi mulcebas solitas jucunda labores;
Tu mihi delicias nocte dieque dabas:
Tu formâ præstans, Tu vultu animoque serena,
Tu sacri consors non superanda gradûs:
Cunctis grata comes, sine labe, sine arte decora,
Perpetua morum simplicitate placens.
Te liberi abreptam, Te stirps numerosa nepotum,
Te quot te nôrant pectore, et ore dolent.
Ast ego;—quot fractæ lenimina dulcia vitæ
Languidus amisi, Te moriente, Senex!
Dum tamen hæc miserum sine Te me terra tenebit,
Solamen misero Te meminisse dabit!
Sit mihi, quem Tecum heic lustra ultra undena bearunt,
Tecum inter sanctos portio læta choros!
Sic iterum juncti, per lustra immensa fruemur
Placati in CHRISTO cognitione DEI!
Interea, O! fælix Tu CHRISTI in pace quiesce,
Post breve in æternum restituenda MIHI!

After having had thus presented to his view the various pursuits of Mr. Skinner's public, professional life, the reader may still expect to find some short detail of the particulars of his private, domestic course, a brief account of which shall now form the conclusion of this biographical sketch.

Having married at an early period, and been restricted for several years by motives of prudence to the society of that small circle of friends, into whose company the principles of the nonjuring clergy were no bar to their admission, his time was chiefly employed in solitary study, and in

in the discharge of those important duties, which he owed to the numerous, and steady flock, that had been committed to his pastoral care. Of the progress of his studies, and of the difficulties under which they were prosecuted, an account has been already given; and if a detail, equally minute, could be given of the manner, in which he discharged the duties, as well of the father of a family, as of a christian pastor, it would reflect greater honour on his memory, than even those persevering efforts, by means of which he surmounted the obstacles that stood in his way to the eminence which he reached in the ranks of learning; obstacles, which by most other men would have been found insurmountable.

Perhaps in no district of Scotland is a situation to be found, where local scenery is less animating, or social intercourse, generally speaking, less likely to call forth the "feast of reason, and the flow of soul," than where yet stands the little, tranquil, thatched abode, in which, for considerably more than half a century, dwelt the subject of this Memoir. Yet was Mr. Skinner's humble dwelling the regular resort of all, who, for many miles round, had a wish for theological discussion, or any respect for classical acquirements. The good man used to boast, that such was his situation, far apart from any public road, or public attraction, and equally apart from the private attractions of luxurious fare, and nice accommodation, he certainly owed to personal attractions only all the visits that were paid to him.* Accustomed to a retreat so void of

* It may, in truth, be said, that aware of the cheerless prospect, which, in that particular spot, nature, even in her gayest mood, exhibited, Mr. Skinner

of external charms, his favourite haunt was the moss-grown bank of a little sedgy brook, or *burn*, which, without the semblance of a current, served, on one side, as a fence to his garden. There, for an hour or two every forenoon, during the latter part of his life, and in the seasons of summer and autumn, would he lie, outstretched upon the grass, not contemplating, the reader may believe, the beauties of the surrounding scenery, but basking in the noontide sunshine. So far from oppressing him, this, in his belief, seemed to act alike upon his bodily frame, as did the meridian splendour of the Sun of Righteousness upon his soul; employed, as on these occasions, it uniformly was in tracing out, and delighting in, the analogy between the material sun, and Him who said—"I am the light of the world."

It was justly observed by a friend, well acquainted with his literary character, that "the predominant powers of "Mr. Skinner's mind were memory and imagination. "So tenacious indeed was his memory, that he seemed "to

Skinner *literally* acted up to the gospel rule of "not putting his candle un-"der a bushel." For its light was diffused over a dreary plain of almost two miles square, in which neither house, nor tree, nor stone, nor shrub, (unless a straggling bush of broom deserves the name) is to be seen.—"But," he would say to his visitors, "what consolation have I? *My taper* "*never burns in vain.* For should it fail to cheer myself, and family, it "never fails to cheer some roaming youth, or solitary traveller, since the "polar star itself is not truer to its position, than is the position of the Lin-"shart candle, its rise and set, true to the Buchan Hind." On this account he never permitted either curtain or window-shutter to intercept its rays: And often has he been heard to say, that "while there was a chance "of any human creature traversing the *Langgate*" (the appropriate name of the uninhabited waste, on the eastern boundary of which his cottage stood) "He could not bear to go to bed."

" to have forgotten nothing which he had ever read, or " heard, that was worth the remembering; and so ac- " tive was his imagination, that when pressed in argu- " ment, as every man who takes a share in conversation " must sometimes be, it never failed to furnish him " with some ludicrous combination of ideas, apparently " related to the question at issue, which, if it did not al- " ways carry conviction to the minds of the company, " was sure to excite their laugh at least, against his anta- " gonist. His dexterity in this kind of warfare, had he " bestowed a little more time than he seems to have done " in the study of speculative science, would certainly " have made him, what Boswell says, Johnson was, *one* " *of the most powerful debaters that ever wielded the wea-* " *pons of sophistry;* but for almost every thing called me- " taphysics, or that is related to metaphysics, Mr. Skin- " ner professed the most sovereign contempt, as well as " for the very phrase—*Natural Religion.*" Such was the opinion entertained of his powers of mind, by one who had long been his constant correspondent, and warm admirer,* and who, in a letter to the Editor, containing the foregoing remarks, added what follows, with a view to its being here inserted.

" By the reader, who discriminates between the use, " and the abuse of metaphysics, and of the phrase, *Na-* " *tural Religion*, the contempt in which they were held " by this eminent scholar and theologian will be regret- " ed. Convinced, however, that it proceeded from no " de-

* Dr. Gleig, at Stirling, already mentioned, as then a Presbyter, now a Bishop in the Scotch Episcopal Church.

" defect of reasoning, or speculative powers, he will be
" inclined to ascribe it to local situation, to a just detes-
" tation of the purposes, for which, of late years, both
" metaphysics, and the doctrine of natural religion have
" been employed by designing men, and more properly
" still to that ardent zeal for the supreme prerogative of
" divine revelation, which in Mr. Skinner's estimation
" ought not, by the ambassador of Christ, to be for a mo-
" ment lost sight of. Hence too will be thought to
" have arisen his unshaken attachment to the opinions
" and disquisitions, as well philosophical, as critical, of
" Mr. Hutchinson: And learned men will naturally con-
" clude, that had Mr. Skinner's residence been in a large
" city, where he would have had daily opportunities of
" conversing with persons eminent in the various depart-
" ments of science, and of watching the progress of
" physical discovery, he might have escaped some preju-
" dices, which obscured, though in a slight degree, the
" most brilliant talents; and he would certainly have per-
" ceived, that the science which ascertains the laws of
" human thought, whether denominated metaphysics, or
" any thing else, is a science of the highest importance;
" and that there has never been an uninspired writer,
" whose opinions, whether critical, or philosophical, have
" all been entitled to equal respect. Nay, under these
" circumstances, it is presumable, that Mr. Skinner
" might have been brought to perceive, that the phrase
" *Natural Religion* may, without injury to the cause,
" which he had so much at heart, be used by those who
" are as little inclined as he was, to attribute the origin
" of our theological knowledge to the discoveries of hu-

" man reason.* His situation, however, gave him little " opportunity of conversing but with men, whose intel- " lectual

* There is a passage in the 37th Chapter of the 2d Book of Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, which Dr. Gleig wished to be subjoined in a note, as expressing exactly his opinion of what reason is equal to in religion. The passage is as follows—" Præclare ergo Aristoteles, si essent, inquit, qui sub " terra semper habitavissent, bonis et illustribus domiciliis, quæ essent " ornata signis, atque picturis, instructaque rebus iis omnibus, quibus a- " bundant ii, qui beati putantur, nec tamen exissent unquam supra ter- " ram,—accepissent autem fama et auditione, esse quoddam numen, et " vim deorum ;—deinde aliquo tempore, patefactis terræ faucibus, ex il- " lis abditis sedibus evadere in hæc loca quæ nos incolimus, atque exire " potuissent, cum repente terram, et maria, cælumque vidissent, nubium " magnitudinem, ventorumque vim cognovissent, adspexissentque solem, " ejusque tum magnitudinem, pulchritudinemque, tum etiam efficientiam " cognovissent, quod is diem efficeret, toto cœlo luce diffusa ; cum au- " tem terras nox opacasset, tum cœlum totum cernerent, astris distinc- " tum, et ornatum, lunæque luminum varietatem, tum crescentis, tum " senescentis, eorumque omnium ortus, et occasus, atque in omni æter- " nitate ratos, immutabilesque cursus; hæc cum viderent, profecto et " esse deos, et hæc tanta opera deorum esse arbitrarentur."

A writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, (vol. XVIII. p. 419,) after quoting this passage from Cicero, draws from it the following very just and proper inference—" From this passage it is evident, that the Stagyrite, " though he considered the motions of the heavenly bodies, the ebbing " and flowing of the sea, and the other phænomena of nature, as affording " a complete *proof* of the being and providence of God, did not however " suppose, that from these phænomena, an untaught barbarian would dis- " cover this fundamental principle of religion. On the contrary, he ex- " pressly affirms, that before a man can feel the force of the evidence " which they give of this important truth, he must have *heard* of the exis- " tence and power of a God." To the same purpose, a Reviewer in the *British Critic*, (vol. XXII. p. 398) says of the above passage from Cicero —" This we think a just view of the powers of reason, when employed on " religion. Though not qualified to make those discoveries, which are " sometimes attributed to her by christian philosophers, yet when she has " learned *fama et auditione*, that there is a God, she clearly perceives the " truth

" lectual powers were so inferior to his own, that there " could be no collision between them; and the conse- " quence was, that such of his opinions, as may have " been canvassed in conversation, received additional " stability from the very arguments which were urged " for their overthrow. By the writer of these remarks, " with whom, of all his brethren, he had perhaps the " most earnest controversies both in theology, and in hu- " man science, he has often been pronounced the bright- " est ornament of the Scotch Episcopal Church, during " the latter half of the eighteenth century, and the same " clergyman, who is himself not unknown in the repub- " lic of letters, authorizes it to be said, that in his opi- " nion, Mr. Skinner would have been a very bright or- " nament of any church in any century—" ὁ λυχνος, ὁ " " καιομενος, και φαινων."

 After

" truth of what she has learned, from the creation of the world, and is " compelled to admit his " eternal power and Godhead." " As soon as " the Creator is *shewn* to us," says another learned writer, " that is, as " soon as we are *taught* that there is a Creator necessarily existent, and of " infinite perfections, our understandings readily admit the idea of such a " Being, and we find in the natural world innumerable testimonies to the " truth of the doctrine. But these testimonies, though evidently designed " to corroborate the truth, and to preserve it from being disregarded or " forgotten, do not appear to be the *source* whence the first knowledge of " it was derived. For *this* we are compelled to search elsewhere. And " since there is no proof that men ever *did* arrive at this knowledge, with- " out some previous *instruction*, or that it *can* be acquired merely by ob- " servation on the natural and visible world; what conclusion appears so " rational and satisfactory, as that it was from the beginning communicated " to man by the Creator himself?" See all this most satisfactorily proved in a Series of excellent Sermons, preached at Boyle's Lectures, by the Rev. William Van Mildert, M.A. Rector of St. Mary le Bow, London, and published in 1800.

After having seen him exhibited in this favourable light, it is needless to offer any remarks on his style as an author, farther than to observe, what every candid reader will perceive, that it seldom offends against the principles of grammar. It is therefore entitled to the praise of being always perspicuous, and to higher praise Mr. Skinner never aspired. He spoke indeed with some contempt of those Scotchmen, who, writing on grave and important subjects, direct the greater part of their time and attention to the *balancing of words and sentences*, in the vain hope of writing the English language with all the purity and precision which mark the compositions of well-educated Englishmen; and he justly observed, that a history, or a sermon, or even a moral essay, is of very little value, if it have nothing to recommend it but elegance of style.

Another opportunity will offer for mentioning Mr. Skinner's early turn for poetry, and the facility with which he used to compose verses, both in Latin and English, and in the Scottish dialect. Specimens of all these will be found in a third, or supplementary volume, and introduced with suitable remarks, and such testimonies to the merit of these poetic effusions, as, it is hoped, will satisfy the reader of the propriety of presenting them to the public, and in the separate form that has been adopted. It was not however his versifying talent only, which enabled him to afford that sort of pleasure and delight, the exciting of which is considered as one great object of the poetic art. He also possessed such an abundant fund of wit and good humour, as rendered his conversation not only lively and animating, but even pleasantly playful, when

when occasion called for displaying his most fascinating manner. He had indeed the happy talent of always adapting his conversation to his company, whether high or low, old or young, learned or illiterate, provided they were neither fanatical, nor factious, loose, nor intemperate. With persons of any of these descriptions, he never willingly associated, nor had *they* any inclination to associate with *him*. Yet in this land of freedom it is hardly possible to avoid mixing occasionally with such people, unless by a resolution of not entering into company at all; a resolution, which cannot with propriety be adopted by any man of Mr. Skinner's profession. When led therefore by unavoidable engagements into such promiscuous society, as often gives rise to political, religious, or other disputes, it was always his endeavour to get rid of them as quickly as possible, either by fair argument, when he found the parties disposed to listen to his reasoning; or, when that would not do, by some unexpected pleasantry, which diverted the attention of the company from the subject of debate.*

In the latter part of his life, not being able to go much from home, the chief topic of conversation, which Mr. Skinner was often obliged to discuss with his immediate neighbours, was that of agricultural improvement; a subject

* It was a trifling dispute of this kind, among the "Whig and Tory" gentlemen of a company, which induced the lady of the house where Mr. Skinner was visiting, to ask, if he could make words to the beautiful Reel of Tullochgorum; when he, immediately perceiving the design of the question, said—"he would try," and accordingly gratified her wishes, and (as *Burns*, the Ayrshire poet, said) "the wishes of every lover of "Scottish Song, in this most excellent ballad."

ject on which he seemed to hold opinions peculiar to himself. He saw, or thought he saw, that innovations in husbandry would lead the farmer into temptations, to which hitherto, in his pristine state of rural simplicity, when to plough, to sow, and to reap, were all his care, he had been a perfect stranger. Nay, such was his prejudice against the landlord binding his tenant to a fixed rotation of crop (in establishing which practice, the Lord of the manor, on which he resided, has, for some years, shewn the most commendable zeal) that the introduction of the subject never failed to offend him.—"What!" he would say, "has the boasted freedom of our land really "come to this, that the man who cultivates it is to become "a *slave*, nay the only slave to be found in our country? "For transfer a *Negro* to the happy soil of Britain, and "the law pronounces him free." This anecdote is introduced to shew the reader, that of Mr. Skinner,

"Ev'n the failings leaned to virtue's side."

Not that he was blind to the *advantages* which modern improvements in husbandry are daily exhibiting, as well on the face of a country, as in the increase of its produce: But he saw and felt the *disadvantages*, which, on its first introduction, must necessarily go along with such systematic improvement. By it the cottager and his family are driven into some adjacent town or village, where, in betaking themselves to a sedentary occupation in some dirty, ill-aired lane, or alley, the parents lose both their health and spirits, and where the family is, for the most part, placed in the road to ruin, the sons being taught to renounce their God—the daughters brought to renounce their virtue! Thus, at no very distant date, did Mr. Skinner,

ner, in one year, give testimonials of character to no less a number than from seventy to eighty of the members of his congregation, emigrating from the parish of Longside, to the towns of Peterhead and Aberdeen. And, as he ever beheld his flock with the same interest and regard, as if they had been members of his family, there occurred but few instances, where, on signing testimonials in their favour, he did not heave a sigh, in looking forward to the consequences of their removal. Nor was it only to those who were placed more immediately under his pastoral care, that his benevolence was extended. Though he always considered *them* as entitled to his first and principal concern, yet did he never feel himself more happily employed, than when administering relief to the distresses, whether bodily or mental, of all that were within his reach, and would listen to his advice, whatever might be their religious profession. As no medical practitioner resided within four or five miles of Longside, soon after his settlement there, Mr. Skinner's sympathy was often excited by perceiving his neighbours suffering under a want, of which the state of the country afforded no prospect of a regular supply. He resolved therefore to devote part of his own time to the study of physic, and with the aid of an eminent physician in Aberdeen,* who approved of his de-

* Dr. Thomas Livingston, no less eminent as a surgeon, than as a physician. In the former department his operations excited general admiration. They were conducted with singular dexterity and steadiness, with a presence of mind, which nothing could discompose; and to which were added a wonderful facility in devising expedients, and an affectionate attention to the feelings of the sufferer. It was observed, that he was uncommonly successful in cutting for the stone, an operation in which he had few equals, and perhaps no superior. This made him particularly well-qualified

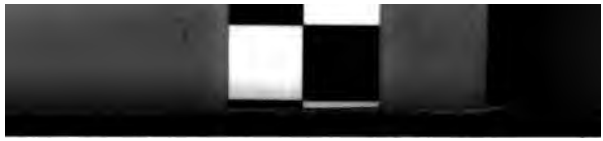
design, and felt the force of the motives from which it sprung, he soon acquired such a knowledge of the healing art, as enabled him to afford to the poor, labouring under

qualified for the charge of the Aberdeen Infirmary: an office which he held for upwards of thirty-two years, and acquitted himself in it with the highest credit to himself, and the most substantial benefit to that most excellent institution. This was very justly remarked by a learned friend, who drew up a short account of his life, and thus summed up his professional character—" No physician ever possessed, in a higher degree, the con-" fidence of his patients. His education, long experience, and extensive " practice, joined to an uncommon share of natural sagacity, much know-" ledge of the world, and of human nature, and a genius for accurate ob-" servation, gave him every advantage that could be derived from great " abilities; and his gentle manners, humane temper and pleasing conver-" sation, made those abilities doubly respectable, and doubly useful. He " knew how to soothe the dejected, to comfort the timorous, and with " good natured pleasantry, to amuse the whimsical. He thought no of-" fice of humanity beneath the medical character, and would readily be-" come the apothecary, and even the nurse, of his patient, when by so " doing, he thought he could remove anxiety, or alleviate pain." An early intimacy, increased by repeated acts of friendship, had endeared him much to Mr. Skinner, who, on hearing of his death, which happened very suddenly on the 9th of March, 1785, gave vent to the most heartfelt regret, in these tenderly expressive lines—

Ultra Nestorem cui dudum optavimus annos
  Abstulit en! subito sæva et acerba dies!
Ille Livingstonii celebrato nomine clarus,
  Ille salutiferi duxque, decusque chori,
Quo non dexterior, non ore facetior alter,
  Vir sine fastu hilaris, vir sine fraude sagax.
Heu! qualem amisit conjux dilecta maritum!
  Heu! qualem plorat mœsta propago patrem!
Perdidit heu qualem miserorum turba Medentem!
  Ah! tantum luctus cur dedit una dies!
Ipse ego per multos illi junctissimus annos
  Majori ætate, at mutuo amore fruens,
Depressus senio, talique orbatus amico,
  Misceo nunc lacrymis publica damna meis.

under disease, that relief, which they could not otherwise have easily obtained, and the want of which might sometimes have proved fatal. It is proper to add, that for his medical prescriptions he accepted no fees, his profession, as he said, being that of a *clergyman*, and not of a *physician*. The people who had experienced the benefit of them, were indeed generally grateful; and when their gratitude led them to listen to his "ghostly counsel "and advice," he deemed himself more than sufficiently rewarded. To relieve distress of every kind, as far as he was able, seemed to be his greatest delight. When he heard of a neighbour sick, or afflicted in mind, not only were his favourite studies instantly laid aside, but even his bed was frequently forsaken, that he might hasten to pour the balm of christian comfort into the wounded spirit, and exert his best endeavours to restore vigour to the wasted frame. In these "labours of love," he appeared to disregard his own health—exposing himself, without hesitation, to cold and rain, and midnight hours: And, when his anxious family would endeavour to dissuade him from running such hazards, his constant reply was, that "HE, who had made his frame *robust*, had surely made "it so, for some good purpose."

That such a man should have gained the esteem and affection of all to whom he was thoroughly known, may be considered as a matter of course. Unprincipled as a great part of the human race has been in every age, and strong as were the prejudices of many of his countrymen, during the earlier part of Mr. Skinner's life, against the principles, both religious and political, of the church to which he belonged, it was impossible to be-



hold, without love and veneration, a man of sincere piety, and superior learning, thus exhausting himself in the service of the poor of all denominations, healing their bodies, and labouring to perform a more valuable cure on their minds. It may therefore with truth be said, that although his zeal in propagating what he believed to be sound and salutary principles, both in religion and politics, was unceasingly active, and the wit keen, with which he exposed to ridicule and contempt the follies of fanaticism, and the mischiefs of faction; yet among persons of solid judgment, had Mr. Skinner very few, if any enemies, unless it was during that disastrous, but happily not very long period, when hatred to the Scotch Episcopal Church was deemed a test of loyalty to the House of Brunswick.*

Even under all the depressing circumstances which marked the sadly wasting period now referred to, and made it appear as threatening total devastion to that small portion of the christian vineyard, in which Mr. Skinner was called to labour, his industry was unwearied, his care and vigilance without intermission. As a less trying and

* It may here be remarked, that although Mr. Skinner became a conscientious convert from Presbyterianism to Episcopacy, and had no scruple to join with the Scotch Episcopal Church, in a warm and generous sympathy for the sufferings of the unfortunate House of Stuart, yet did he never entertain a wish for the restoration of that exiled family, with a view to any benefit that might be expected from it, either to the nation at large, or to that particular religious society, of which he was a member. Wisely considering the just prerogatives of the crown, as the surest guard to the liberties of the people, he might have been called a Tory, but could not be said to be a Jacobite: A circumstance well known to the writer of this *Memoir.*

and at last tolerating season returned to the church, which called for the continuance of his faithful services, they were given with a vigour and alacrity, increasing, as it were, in proportion to the publicity, and hopes of success, by which they were attended. Besides discharging all the public duties of his profession, with a punctuality and exactness, which, till extreme old age came on, hardly met with any interruption, but during the six months of what may be called his professional imprisonment, he was most assiduous in performing those many occasional offices, which are called for in a numerous congregation, and particularly in catechizing the young members of it, at those stated periods which the practice of the church has long set apart for that purpose.*

In regard to one very essential part of pastoral labour, it is rather a singular instance, that after finishing a course of upwards of sixty years active clerical duty, Mr. Skinner should have left but a very small number of Manuscript Sermons, and these, written at a very early stage of his pastoral life, before he had got time to travel over that wide-extended field of theological research, which afterwards gave employment to so many years of the most laborious study. Often was he heard to unfold with infinite humour, the sadly perplexing, but ludicrous accident, which determined him to abandon the use of pa-

* His method was, to catechize the adult members of his congregation, until they passed their 25th year, the fixing of which period, he would jocosely say, made the *lasses* the more regular in their attendance, since, so long as they attended the *Examin* (as the diet of catechizing is, in Scotland, vulgarly termed) they were considered as being "*Young enough to* "*marry yet.*"

pers in the pulpit, and betake himself to *extempore* preaching.* In the performance of this, which appears to many a very difficult task, his mode of elucidating the doctrines and duties of christianity may be said to have been peculiarly his own. So completely was he master of the whole volume of revealed truth, and that not only thro' the medium of the English Versions, but in the original Greek and Hebrew languages, that he no sooner fixed on a subject of discourse, (which rarely happened *before ten o'clock on Saturday night)* than every parallel passage from the Genesis of Moses, to the Revelation of St John, was in view. These passages he first gave to his audience in detail; and should there have occurred somewhat beyond the necessary harmony of doctrine or precept, even

* The following lively account was given of this accident by a very near relation of Mr. Skinner's, who took it down from his own mouth. "After "the destruction of his chapel, (in the manner already mentioned) the peo- "ple assembled for worship in his dwelling-house, where no more than four "persons, besides the family, could be legally present. His temporary "desk being placed in an open passage, and immediately in front of the "entry, (that more might hear than met the preacher's eye) a *hen* had "one day unfortunately found her way into one of the apartments, and "*cackled*, "as she went, for want of thought." The people taking mea- "sures to rid themselves of the noisy intruder, the persecuted fowl took "flight, and darting through the passage, just as the parson had given out "his text, dissipated in her flight the unstitched pages, on which were "carefully recorded—"each thought that breathed, and word that burn- "ed" and gave them to the merciless wind." At once "high poised in "air," all attempts to restore to the bewildered preacher the well penned effusions of his theological skill were vain. "Their place could no "where be found!" 'Tis rash, without maturest thought to vow, and yet the vow, which in a luckless hour, a calamity so dire, impelled Mr. Skinner, rashly, to make, he, to his dying hour, deferred not to pay; by which means, to the unavailing regret of all his friends—"tot congestos, "*noc*tesque, diesque labores hauserit una dies."

even a harmony of expression, or, as often was the case, some interesting Greek or Hebrew vocable, which pervaded the whole,—that *vocable* he never failed to exhibit in all the appropriate, and edifying lights which scriptural usage warranted, until even he, who "occupied "the room of the unlearned," became, as an apostle says, "convinced of all." His Discourses on our Saviour's Parables, and on the Epistles and Gospels, and some of the proper Lessons appointed by the church throughout the year, which were his favourite themes, must live in the recollection of those, to whom they were addressed, until they themselves shall have ceased to live. What a pity it is, that such as have heard of them only by the hearing of the ear, must be told, to their disappointment, that to every purpose of general edification, as "the morning cloud, and as the early dew," even these truly instructive Discourses have "passed away!"

When a friend, who had come from a considerable distance to visit him, observed to Mr. Skinner, with what ease and fluency of expression he preached extempore; his reply was ready—"Does a man require study and pre-"paration to talk to his own family? Of the numerous "congregation which you saw assembled in chapel to-"day, I have baptized more than *three-fourths*. I "therefore consider them as my children; and surely he "feels not as a parent, who does not address his chil-"dren as he feels, without awe or restraint."—It was therefore the constant practice of this faithful and affectionate guide to take his children by the hand, and lead them back for instruction through all those diversified scenes of divine love displayed in the sacred scriptures, as the

the only means of making men wise unto salvation. The attainment of this heavenly wisdom was the great point to which the attention of Mr. Skinner's audience was continually directed,—and directed by that unerring Light, which shews in the brightest colours the nature and condition of man, his misery and his happiness, his fall and his recovery, or, in the words of scripture, after what manner he "died in Adam," and how "in Christ he "may again be made alive." This was what they were ever taught to behold as the great design of all divine revelation, and taught to look for it as the "Treasure "which was hid in the field," both of the Old and the New Testament. It was with this view that they were so often led back to the contemplation of what was exhibited by Moses and the prophets, and by that Law, which served as a "Schoolmaster unto Christ," by teaching the rudiments of his gospel, and so laying the foundation of a true knowledge of him, and of the salvation to be accomplished by him.

Thus it was that the *Linshart Pastor* was zealously employed in training up the disciples of Christ entrusted to his care, pointing out to them, as his beloved flock, those pastures of life, which the great Shepherd of Israel has provided for all them that are duly entered into, and carefully abide within, his happy fold. There it is, that the christian institutions serve to keep them under the "continual dew of his blessing," dispensing that heavenly nourishment which will "preserve both their souls "and bodies unto everlasting life." Would the reader therefore wish to see that reciprocally genuine attachment and regard, which ought to subsist between the christian

pastor,

pastor, and his flock, happily exemplified, he must be introduced to an Easter-day scene, in the humble Linshart Parsonage. Aware of the length of the sacred service on that solemn occasion, and many of them residing at such a distance, as to prevent them getting any refreshment at home, the good people of the congregation never failed, during the preceding week, to pour in upon the much-loved Spouse of their venerable Pastor, such a quantity of provisions, as employed the house-maids for several days in preparing for the expected guests. And no sooner was the Morning Service of the festal day concluded, than every room in the house was filled with people from the chapel, to all of whom, without distinction, the utmost attention was shewn, and plain, substantial fare of every kind distributed by two or more persons, in each apartment, whose office it was to see that every one of them did take a little. At this sober and serious entertainment, it is needless to say, what mutual love and harmony prevailed; and in what veneration all present seemed to hold the occasion of their thus assembling, as well as the worthy pair, under whose roof they were assembled! The countenance of the entertainer, when with brimful eyes he went from room to room, welcoming his people, and wishing them all the spiritual comforts of the season, bespoke him to have "put on bowels of mercies, "kindness, humbleness of mind, and that charity, which "is the very bond of perfectness." The countenances of the entertained shewed, that, from his "ruling well, "and labouring in the word and doctrine, they account-"ed their pastor worthy of double honour:" While both, when studied, as they deserved, would have served to melt the stony heart of unbelief, and to convey to the hea-

heavenly-minded christian a foretaste of that harmony, benevolence, piety, gratitude, and mutual love and esteem, which shall one day be found to pervade "the "general assembly, and church of the first-born."

In the account that has now been given of the Person, whose humble, but active life, forms the subject of the present Memoir, the writer of it may truly say, with the Biographer of Bishop Horne, "nothing has been con- "cealed out of fear, nothing added out of malice."— The story of Mr. Skinner's life has been told, as nearly as possible, after the form, and manner, in which, it is presumed, he himself would have wished it to have been told; if indeed it could be said, that he ever had a wish to be thus handed down to posterity. Those, who conversed, or corresponded with him, a few years before his death, will recollect how little he then thought of any worldly fame, when compared with that nobler object, which he used to describe, as the warmest wish of his heart, in the following beautiful couplet—

"Sat calamo, famæque datum,—sat ad utraque *vixi*,
"Sit mihi nunc studium discere velle *mori*."

The only purpose, therefore, which is meant to be served by this attempt to delineate the studies and labours of his life, is to shew what may be done, by those possessed of mental powers similar to what he enjoyed, even under all the hardships of an obscure and straitened condition of life, the effects of which are well expressed in these words of the poet—

"Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat
"Res angusta domi."

Strug-

Struggling with all these difficulties, this diligent servant of God has proved, by the clearest of all arguments, by a shining example, that talents, such as he was endowed with, may be, and ought to be, improved and laid out for the benefit of others, even under every disadvantage arising from the pressure of poverty, or any other inconvenience of local situation. But as it was long since observed, that "the earthly tabernacle weigheth "down the mind, that museth upon many things," so may it also be said, that the mind which museth upon many things, and especially upon losses and disappointments, is equally apt to weigh down the body, and wear out all its faculties, nothing being more certain, than that "heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stoop, and "that, by reason of sorrow, the eye also is dim." In addition to the heavy loss which Mr. Skinner had been lamenting ever since the autumn of 1799, when he was deprived of his beloved companion, the partner of all his joys and sorrows, the spring of 1807 presented to his mind another deeply afflicting event, which gave a fresh wound to his still bleeding and broken heart. This was the much-lamented death of his amiable daughter-in-law, Mrs. Skinner, at Aberdeen, who was cut off in a very unexpected manner, after a short, but most severe illness.* Under the deepest anxiety to hear how his Son was enabled to bear this severest stroke, which the hand of death could inflict, he received the following account written for his satisfaction, by the sufferer himself, a few weeks after his beloved wife had been removed from him.

"Great is the loss which we have all sustained on this

* See the Lines written on this occasion, at the end of the Third Volume.

" most melancholy occasion. But her own family—O!
" what have they not lost—one of the most tender and
" affectionate mothers, so anxious for their welfare, so
" kind and attentive to them in every situation! If it were
" not that I have already been obliged to write so much
" on this most affecting subject, I should wonder at my
" being still able to dwell upon it, and give vent to those
" feelings, which in my mind are inseparable from it.
" There is a luxury in indulging this kind of sober, se-
" rious grief, while it tends to cherish the resignation of
" the heart, and keeps at a distance every repining
" thought. May no such thought ever find a place in
" my breast, fortified, as, I trust, it will always be, by
" the aid of an Almighty Comforter, and a grateful
" sense of the many blessings which I still enjoy,—the
" sympathy of numerous friends, and the affectionate at-
" tention of those of my own family, all striving to do
" what they can for my comfort and support! Who
" could have the heart to murmur under the impression
" of so many instances of divine mercy and compassion!
" Who but would say in any such a case, as what I have
" now experienced, severe and trying as it is, " It is the
" Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." To him it
" belongs to act the part of a wise and tender Father, to
" such a Father we have only to say—" thy will be done!"

This letter had the desired effect on the old man's feelings, and was soon after followed by a visit from his Son, who, anxious to pay the last duties to his aged parent, gave him at parting a pressing invitation to come to Aberdeen, and spend the remainder of his days in a family, where every attention would be shewn to his weakness,

weakness, and his wants. Of this invitation his acceptance was intimated in the few following lines, written with some difficulty by his tottering hand, and dated May 25, 1807.

" My dear Son,

" If any thing had been necessary to increase the affection, which I have always had for you, both as a " Son and a Bishop, it would have been your proposal at " parting, and your pathetic way of asking from me a " favour, which the doubts and fears I had always prevented my asking from you. But as you have removed all these, I cordially embrace your proposal, and " am making ready to be with you, God willing, next " week. By that time you will have got your Forfar " friends about you, and I wish much to share in that " pleasure, and see once more my children's grand-children, and peace upon Israel. So God grant us a happy meeting even here, and at last a still more happy " meeting in Abraham's bosom hereafter. This is the " constant, and shall, I hope, be the dying wish of your " truly and deservedly affectionate Father,"

The venerable Father came to Aberdeen accordingly on the 4th of June, in time, he said, to have drunk the King's health, had he been able to go to the Town-hall.— For a week or ten days after his arrival at his Son's house, he seemed to enjoy his usual health and spirits, receiving with pleasure the visits of his acquaintances, and amusing them with old stories, and anecdotes of men and things almost forgotten in the present generation. At last

he began, not to complain, for no complaint was heard to pass his lips, but to shew symptoms of a little tendency to fever, and to feel, what he called, a palpitation at the heart, and a more than usual difficulty in breathing.— This he considered as a gentle warning of the approach of that awful messenger, whose business it would soon be to summon him hence, and was thankful, he said, " for this " previous knock at the door, rather than that the har- " binger of death should abruptly come in, and tell him " instantly to remove." In the midst of these friendly intimations, that the concluding scene could not be far distant, yet not knowing precisely the extent of that distance, he would talk now and then with his Son, when by themselves, of this and the other literary pursuit, in which they would employ the dreary months of winter, and thus, if God pleased, get through that gloomy season, in a way the most congenial to their feelings, affording mutual comfort and support to each other. But the will of heaven, always wise and good, had ordered otherwise, and as it was said of the patriarch Israel, so was it true of this happy partaker in the faith of *Israel*, " *the* " *time drew nigh, that he must die.*" On the 16th of June, he had passed the forenoon in reading and conversing as usual, and being told after dinner, that it was the birth-day of his grand-daughter from Forfar, who with four of her children were all about him, he took a glass of wine and water, and grasping her hand, with all the warmth of paternal love, wished many returns of the day, and all happiness to her and hers. After reposing a little while, he felt himself somewhat uneasy, and said, he would take a gasp of air in the garden. He had not been there many minutes, when his strength seemed to be com-

pletely gone, and it was with much difficulty he was helped into the house, where being placed in a chair, and supported by his Son, and others, he calmly closed his eyes, and without the least appearance of struggle, without even a sigh, or a groan, expired. This was, so literally, falling asleep, or had so much the resemblance of a fainting fit, that for some little time, the usual restoratives were tried, but all in vain. The spirit had left its mortal tenement, never to return to it more, till that great change take place, when "this corruptible shall put on "incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immorta-"lity;" and then to him, and all the saints of God, shall death be for ever "swallowed up in victory."

Having taken his Son's promise, that his remains should be deposited in the same grave with those of his departed wife, the request was readily complied with, and his funeral attended by a numerous assemblage of sorrowing friends, to the Church-yard of Longside, where two of his Grandsons, Presbyters, joined with the Bishop in reading the Burial Service, with the most impressive solemnity. No sooner was the interment over, than the principal members of the congregation set on foot a subscription for erecting a Monument, in testimony of their sincere regard to the memory of their much-beloved and justly-respected Pastor. The Monument is now to be seen at his grave, and on a handsome tablet of fine statuary marble, is engraved the following inscription—

יהוה

GLORY TO GOD ALONE!

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF

THE REVEREND JOHN SKINNER,

FOR LXIV. YEARS AND UPWARDS
EPISCOPAL CLERGYMAN IN THIS PARISH;
WHOSE ATTAINMENTS AS A SCHOLAR,
AND SCRIPTURAL RESEARCH AS A DIVINE,
OF WHICH MANY WRITTEN DOCUMENTS REMAIN,
ACQUIRED HIM A NAME,
NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN IN THE CHURCH,
IN WHICH HE EXERCISED HIS MINISTRY;
WHILE HIS PASTORAL LABOURS IN THE CHARGE COMMITTED
TO HIM,
ENDEARED HIM, ALMOST BEYOND EXAMPLE,
TO THE SORROWING FLOCK, BY WHOM,
IN TESTIMONY OF THEIR HEART-FELT REGARD,
THIS MONUMENT
IS
ERECTED,

ON THE XVI. DAY OF JUNE, 1807, AGED 86 YEARS,
HE SLEPT THE SLEEP OF DEATH, IN THE ARMS OF
THE RIGHT REVD. JOHN SKINNER,
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF ABERDEEN,
HIS ONLY SURVIVING SON,
WHO,
WITH HIS FAMILY, AND OTHER NUMEROUS DESCENDANTS,
SHALL NEVER CEASE TO FEEL THE MOST DEVOUT
AND LIVELY VENERATION FOR THE TALENTS,
THE ACQUIREMENTS,
AND CHARACTER OF A PROGENITOR,
WHO LIVED
SO JUSTLY RESPECTED,
AND DIED
SO SINCERELY LAMENTED.

PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

[IN the preceding MEMOIR of the Life, Studies and Character of the Author of the following Works, particular notice has been taken of two of his Manuscripts, a *Dissertation on the Trinity*, and a *Declaration of Faith*; and sufficient reasons have been assigned to shew the propriety of extracting the substance of both, for the purpose of blending and incorporating it into one *Tract*, under the form of "*Letters* addressed to Candidates for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church of Scotland."

In these Letters now offered to the public, as a part of the Author's posthumous Works, all the essential Articles of the Christian Faith are handled in a manner, which can hardly fail to interest, not the Student of Theology only, but every serious minded Reader, who desires fully to apprehend the things which make for his everlasting peace, and to be "taught as the Truth "is in JESUS. Such of the *Letters* as treat of the Deity of our ever-blessed Redeemer, and the commonly received doctrine of his "Eternal Generation," have been acknowledged, by very competent judges, to contain a more edifying illustration of the "great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," than has been yet exhibited in any modern work on this profoundly deep, and therefore but ill apprehended subject.]

LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

CANDIDATES FOR HOLY ORDERS,

IN THE

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

LETTER I.

THE religion of Christians is founded upon the assured belief of ONE, SUPREME, SELF-EXISTENT ESSENCE, the first cause, and sole creator of heaven, and of earth, and of all things visible, and invisible.

This belief, though consonant to the universal reason of mankind, is not originally deducible, from that reason, or from what is commonly termed *The Light of Nature.* It was early taught to man, by express and immediate revelation from the CREATOR himself. It was manifested to the first ages of mankind by visible and emblematical representations. It was renewed "at sundry times "and in divers manners" by the same infallible Teacher, as his infinite wisdom saw to be most

conducive to man's instruction; and it was, at last, fully and finally established by a continued chain of *inspired writings*, from Moses, down to Christ and his apostles. These writings, to distinguish them from all others, are called THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS; and from them alone, carefully preserved, and handed down, as they have been, to our times, do WE derive our firm belief of that *One Supreme self-existent Essence*[1], "by whom and of whom are all things," and that imperfect knowledge, which our limited faculties can have of him.

But from the general tenour of these scriptures, as well as from particular and apposite declarations, we are taught to believe, and we do stedfastly, I trust, and sincerely believe, that in this *One Supreme*

[1] I use the terms *Supreme Essence*, rather than the philosophical title, *Supreme Being*. I know, that, radically, they both mean the same thing. But I find Dr. Clarke and his metaphysical followers, either forming to themselves, or taking hold of, an ambiguity in the term "*Being*." For they endeavour to confound *Person* and *Being* together, by telling us that *Person* means an *intelligent being*; a matter, which they say, that we cannot, and the fact is, that we do not deny. On this subtle definition, however, they build what constitutes their 'Jugulum Causæ;' that, according to what is esteemed orthodox doctrine, "*in one intelligent being there are three intelligent beings*," or "*that three intelligent beings are one intelligent being*;" whereas the term *Essence*, being more descriptive of the Hebrew names JAH and JEHOVAH, and implying, even in human conception, somewhat more than the simple idea of "*being*" amounts to, prevents that sophism, by fixing, at once, a proper and necessary distinction between *Essence* ὄντως, and *Person*, ὑποστασις, a distinction which was so much agitated in the *age of the Arian* controversy, and which is now totally overlooked by *the Unitarian of modern* times.

preme and self-existent Essence, to whom, in the language of the Old Testament, is given the incommunicable name JEHOVAH; and to whom, in our language, is given the communicable appellation GOD, there do, from all eternity, subsist THREE, whom we call *Persons*, of equal Substance, Power and Eternity; and to whom the divine œconomy, as revealed to us, has assigned the *official* titles of *Father*, *Word* or *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*: thus constituting and presenting to our faith, an incomprehensible *Trinity* of *Persons*, without any inequality or inferiority in the equally incomprehensible *Unity* of *Essence*. For, admitting that the being of a God was discoverable by human reason, it is unquestionably above the capacity of human reason to fathom the whole extent of such being; and it is no more possible to form an adequate idea of what the philosopher terms an *absolute Unity*, than it is possible to form an idea of what the christian believes, a *revealed Trinity*.

How absurd, nay how fraudulent is it, therefore, in the Unitarian reasoner, to be still requiring of the Trinitarian believer, what he himself has never yet produced, and never will be able to produce, in corroboration of his own belief, viz. a clear and satisfactory conception of the existence of the divine Essence, in any form or mode which he may be pleased to fancy! While, on the other hand, it is humbly thought, that there *do exist* some sensible representations, which may enable the sound and

orthodox christian to form some kind of conception, although, by reason of his own natural imperfection, far from being either clear or adequate, of this fundamental article of his faith---a Trinity in Unity. Thus, in the structure of the material heavens, which were made, in order to "declare "the glory of God[1]," philosophy finds a *threefold* subsistence and distinction of fire, light, and air, in the *unity* of one created substance. And even within ourselves, in the corporeal part of our compound frame, we perceive, in strict analogy with this triune subsistence in the material heavens, a *threefold* operation and distinction of senses, in *one* and the same subject, by which we FEEL the *fire*, we SEE the *light*, and we HEAR the *air* or *wind*. Philosophy also discovers, and man's own experience justifies a *threefold* faculty of *will*, *memory*, and *understanding*, in the ONE substance of his spiritual part, the *soul*: all or either of which may be considered as conveying a faint representation, though not an adequate description of the subsistence of a *Trinity* of Persons in the *Unity* of the divine Essence[2]. For it must be confessed that this divine mystery is no less inscrutable to the mind of man, than it is ineffable to his language; insomuch that the various modes of explaining it have never altogether answered the end in view, nor cleared

[1] Psalm xix. 1.

[2] See a little Tract, in the editor's opinion, decisive on this subject, *written by the late* Rev. Wm. Jones of Nayland, and entitled "The "*Trinitarian Analogy*."

cleared up the difficulties, which misapplied ingenuity, and wantonness of imagination, are ever eager to start concerning it,

Full of some expressions to be met with in the Post-Nicene Fathers of the christian church, a majority of modern writers on this subject have held, that the *first* person is really the *fountain of Deity*; (though, be it observed, the common language of *first, second,* and *third* persons, is not *scripture language)* and upon this account have termed him the *eternal father:* that the *second* person is, from all eternity, *generated* or *begotten* by the *first,* and upon that account is the *eternal son*; and that the *third,* eternally, proceeds from the *first* alone, as the Greek church believes, or from the *first* and *second,* according to the Western church, and is the *eternal spirit.* Others again, convinced that such a way of explaining the matter is insufficient to stop the mouths of gainsayers, seem inclined, (with all due deference to the great names who have favoured it) to abandon this scheme of explication; inasmuch as they suspect, that it implies what the adversaries of the doctrine of a Trinity have affirmed it to imply, viz. a SUBORDINATION, or INFERIORITY, contrary to the revealed accounts, and contrary to the received notions of the divine perfections. For this reason, what scripture declarations appear to favour this scheme, they would and do attribute *not* to the *divine nature,* but to that *œconomy,* or *covenanted plan* of grace and mercy,

which

which many of the Fathers take notice of, and lay great stress upon, and which the writers, at present alluded to, are of opinion is always referred to in scripture, as contained in the plural appellation of ALEIM or *covenanters* (we read it GOD) by which the *one* Jehovah [1] is described. They consequently hope, that their explication, as it maintains a perfect equality in the personal subsistence, without ascertaining the mode of that subsistence, so is it free from any such implications, as attach to the scheme of *eternal paternity, eternal generation,* and *eternal procession,* and thus rids at once both scripture and scripture doctrine, of those inconsistencies, with which ancient and modern heretics have not failed to charge them.

That those however, for whose edification the following Series of Letters is intended, may be fully apprized of the truth of these introductory remarks, and of the objections which assail, from various quarters, what is shortly termed "*the doctrine of eternal generation,*" I shall now proceed, previous to developing the other essential branches of theological science, to discuss at some length the two schemes which have been adopted of illustrating a TRINITY in UNITY, that great and fundamental article of our religion; without an implicit belief in which, the profession of christianity is a mere delusion.

LET-

[1] Deut. vi. 4.

LETTER II.

THE title "SON OF GOD" is frequent in Scripture. But we have the highest authority[1] to apply it to the human nature of our blessed Saviour: and I can find no passage in Scripture which decisively restricts the title "*Son of God*" to Deity. To me therefore it appears a great stretch of interpretation (though I know some reputable names, who have gone that length) to draw the *doctrine of eternal generation* out of Jehovah's decree,[2] "Thou art my *son*, this day have I *begotten* thee:" which very decree I find a divinely inspired commentator[3] referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We read, it is true, of that "dear Son," who is the image of the "invisible God, the "*first-born* of every creature[4]." But, to say the least, this text is dubious, being claimed by the Arians; and it is strange from it to distinguish, as has been done, between *priority* of birth, as the principal meaning of the word πρωτοτοκος, and *pre-eminence*, when it is known, that a very little after[5] the apostle uses this word again, and draws the following inference from it, "that in all he might be "πρωτευων," which our translators render "have the "*pre-*

[1] St. Luke i. 35. [2] Ps. ii. 7. [3] Acts xiii. 33.
[4] Col. i. 15. [5] Col. i. 18.

"*pre-eminence.*" Besides all the force of it, when supposed to favour the *generation scheme*, is set aside by giving an active sense to the verbal post-fix "τοκος," a sense which it can well bear. Thus πρωτοτοκος will be found equivalent with "αρχη της "κτισεως[1]" the *beginning* (principium, *principle—not commencement*) of the creation." Indeed the active sense, when given to such terms as πρωτοτοκος, and αρχη, appears equally just and grammatical, as when applied to the terms 'θεολογος'—'καρποφορος,' —'οικονομος, &c. and would assign a peculiar emphasis of expression to the 'λογος' of St. John, corresponding to the active Hebrew term דבר, Dabar, "the SPEAKER"—which I cannot but think much eclipsed under the neuter and passive signification, implied by *verbum*, or *the word*.

St. John no doubt has asserted, that "the *Son* abideth *for ever*.[2]" But this, from the context, appears to be spoken of the *humanity*, and is explained by St. Paul[3] 'ο δε *this* (*man* being put in by the translators) because he *continueth ever*—εις τον αιωνα, &c. Even that text of St. John[4], on which particular stress has been laid, as being an address to the *Father*, is not so full and clear in their favour as its adducers may have supposed, when we compare it with an address in the same terms, but to another purpose, in the gospel of St. Matthew[5]. For I ask, in what capacity does our Saviour here pray

[1] *Revel. iii. 14.* [2] St. John viii. 35. [3] Heb. vii. 24.
[4] *St John xvii. 5.* [5] St. Mat. xxvi. 39—42.

pray to the Father? Certainly not in his divine capacity. Why then may not both addresses be considered, in this respect, on the same footing? Still however, it is assumed, that there is no other name for the *first* person in the Trinity, as distinguished from the *Word* and the *Holy Ghost*, but the name of *Father*; and it is alleged, that if it should be denied, that the *Son* was *eternal*, as *Son*—the very name of *Father* must have been unknown, until the *Word* was *incarnate*.

It has been already remarked, that *first*, *second*, and *third* person is not scriptural language, and therefore, although sanctioned by long use, is not language fit to be argued from in a scriptural controversy. Such titles are not *essential*. They are merely *œconomical* or *official*—peculiar to the christian scheme, and explanatory of it. The title of "*the Word*," and that of the "*Holy Spirit*," are frequently to be met with in the scriptures of the Old Testament. But it is with me a matter of great doubt, whether the term "*Father*" be any where, in those scriptures, used in the restricted sense, for which some writers contend. Irenæus, an ancient critic of no mean repute, applies the title thus—"*Pater* "autem generis humani *verbum* Dei est, quemad- "modum Moses ostendit, dicens"—"nonne hic ipse "*pater* tuus possedit te, et refecit te, et creavit te?" "But the father of the human race is the Word of "God, even as Moses has shewn, saying, Is not he "thy Father that hath bought thee, hath he not

" made thee and established thee[1] ?" Nay, for this application of the title, there is no less authority than that of the prophet Isaiah, who expressly applies to the promised Messiah, the title of " *the ever-* " *lasting Father*[2] ;" and who, in another place, declares, " Thou, O Lord, art *Our Father ;* our " Redeemer from everlasting is thy name[3]." And where at any time the title is used, as relative to *Son,* it is only thus used in a *future* acceptation, as something afterwards to be realized. " I *will be* " to him a *Father,* and he *shall be* to me a *Son* ;[4]" and again, " He *shall* cry unto me, Thou art my " *Father,*" &c. also, " I will make him my *first-* " *born*[5] :" promises these, which although *literally* made, the one to Solomon, the other to David, had yet a strong typical aspect and relation to *One* of more august character than either of them, who vouchsafed to become their descendant, and to whom St Paul exclusively appropriates the promise above alluded to[6].

The passages now quoted do, I think, contain the only account of a divine *paternity* and *filiation* to be met with in the Old Testament. And certainly, on such passages, it will be no easy matter to found the doctrine now under discussion. Nor is it necessary

[1] Oper. Iren. Lib. IV. ch. 51. Deut. xxxii. 6.
[2] Isaiah ix. 6. [3] Isaiah lxiii. 16.
[4] 2 Sam. vii. 14. repeated 1 Chron. xxii. 10.
[5] Psalm lxxxix. 26. and 27.
[6] *Heb. i.* 5. compared with 2 Sam. vii. 18—29.

necessary to strain the language of revelation to support any such doctrine; for, should we deny "*that the Son is eternal as Son,*" and consequently "*that the Father is not eternally Father,*" there is neither heresy nor absurdity in the denial, nor any thing in the least derogatory from the real inherent dignity, and eternity of both; which, for my own part, I stedfastly believe, and can defend without such extraneous aid.

There is another title equally belonging to God, and which, in every ancient creed, whether orthodox or heretical, I find annexed to the title of *Father*—viz. the title of *Creator:* Will it be said, that denying the eternity of the *creature* is denying the eternity of the *Creator?* Why not grant the same latitude in the case of *Father?* We scruple not to say "*eternal Creator*" in himself, not as Creator—and *we* scruple not, in the same way, to say, "*eternal Father.*" But as no christian ever uses the term "*eternal creation,*" why should we be called upon to say "*eternal generation?*" This is not a new mode of reasoning; it is as old as the venerable Father Tertullian, who, when Hermogenes asserted *matter* to be coeval and *coeternal* with God, thus disputes with the heretic—"Quia et pater deus est, et judex deus est, non tamen ideo "*pater* et *judex semper*—quia *deus semper:* nam nec "*pater* potuit esse *ante filium,* nec *judex ante delictum:* fuit autem tempus, cum *et delictum et filius* "*non fuit,* quod judicem, et qui patrem dominum

" faceret[1]." And though Dr Bull, in his *Defensio*, &c. is very angry with Tertullian for this " monstrous effatum," as he calls it, " that there was " a time, when the *Son* was not;" yet, that this primitive writer was, on the whole, staunchly orthodox in this fundamental article, may be proved from the whole tenour of his other works, as well as from the elaborate work just quoted, where, in his usual energetic manner, he thus argues—" Ita " et hoc nomine materiam *Deo* præponit Hermo- " genes, præponendo *eam filio:* Filius enim sermo, " et Deus sermo, et ego et pater unum sumus: nisi " quod sustinebit æquo animo filius eam præponi " sibi, quæ patri adæquatur[2]."

There are however, in the scriptures of the New Testament, two epithets ascribed to the *Son*, which are held to affix " *Deity*" to that appellation. The one epithet is " ἴδιος," proprius—the other " μονο- " γενης," unigenitus, or only begotten. " God," as St Paul affirms—" spared not του ἰδιου υιου—*proprio* " *filio*

1 " Although God be a father, and God be a judge, yet was he not always a father and judge, because he was always God; for neither could he be father, before there was son, nor judge before there was crime; but a time there was, when neither son nor crime existed, that could make God a father or judge." Contra Hermogen. cap. 1.

2 " Thus it is, that Hermogenes places matter before God, by placing it before the Son; for the Son is the Word, and the Word is God, and I and the Father, says he, are one, as if the Son will be well pleased to have that placed before himself which is coeval with the Father." Contra *Hermogen. cap. 9.*

" *filio, his own Son*[1]," &c. from which it is deduced, that he is *God*, because he is God's *proper Son*, of the same *nature* with him; making, in fact, Christ's divine nature to be the consequence of his being ιδιος υιος, God's proper Son. Let the same explanation be given to that other text of the same apostle—" the church of *God*, which he purchased " —δια τε ιδιε αιματος—per *proprium* sanguinem, *with* " *his own blood*," and, I think, it will follow, as an incontrovertible position, *that God may have a Son, in the same sense in which he may have blood*[2]. I need not waste your time in noticing the Arian cavils against the genuineness of " θεος," instead of " κυριος," in this text of the Acts, the present reading being admitted by the writers whom I have in my eye.

I proceed to consider the other epithet μονογενης, only begotten, as it is sometimes used by itself[3], at other times in conjunction with υιος, son[4]. Indeed St Paul uses it in a case perfectly unrestricted, when he says—that " Abraham offered up τον μονογενη " *the only* begotten"—assuredly not true, in a *literal* sense, of the offering up of *Isaac*. And I find a Dr Knight, though an advocate for the current doctrine, observing in his Sermons[5], that the " μονογενης υιος" of St John may signify the same with the υιος αγαπητος *beloved Son*, of St Matthew[6], as the Hebrew word

[1] Rom. viii. 32. [2] Acts xx. 28. [3] John i. 14.
[4] St. John i. 18. iii. 16. 18. [5] p. 139.
[6] Mat. iii. 17.

word יחד Ihid, is by the Septuagint rendered both "μονογενης only begotten," and αγαπητος beloved—"For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing "thou hast not withheld thy son, יחידך Ihidka,—thine "*only* son, τον ἀγαπητον σου, from me[1]." And again, "They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for "an *only* son—על יחד ol Ihid, επι τω αγαπητω[2];" while "μονογενης" is the rendering in the following passages—"deliver my *darling* (margin "*only one*") יחידתי Ihidki—τον μονογενη—*(feminine)* from the pow-"er of the dog[3]." And again, "Turn unto me, "and have mercy upon me, for I am *desolate*—יחיד "Ihid, μονογενης—and afflicted[4]:" and that this is admissible according to the Greek idiom appears from that passage in the Iliad of Homer, where, Astyanax being termed "Εκτορίδην αγαπητον," his scholiast and translators render these epithets—"*only son of* "*Hector*." If therefore there be such a sameness between "μονογενης" and "αγαπητος," no good reason can be assigned for appropriating "μονο-"γενης" to our Saviour's divine nature, since it can be proved from parallel places of Scripture, that "αγαπητος" is applied to his *humanity*, and particularly belongs to it.—"Behold my servant," exclaims Isaiah, "mine elect, in whom my soul "delighteth[5];" referring to the Septuagint translation of which passage, St Matthew writes, "Be-"hold my servant, (ὁ παις μου—puer meus) my *be-*

"*loved*

[1] *Gen.* xxii. 12. [2] *Zech.* xii. 10. [3] *Psalm* xxii. 20.
[4] *Psalm* xxv. 16. [5] *Isaiah* xlii. 1.

"*loved*, in whom my soul ευδοκησεν (as in the bap-
"tismal voice) is well pleased[1]." The αγαπη-
τῷ or *beloved*, in the second clause, is certainly the παις or *servant* in the first; and *servant* is certainly a term inapplicable to Deity—although he, who was *God* by nature, did become a *servant* by choice, that he might be "*obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross[2]."

LETTER III.

HAVING shewn, that if the doctrine of *Eternal Generation* be supposed to originate from Scripture, it is, at best, but the *semblance* of such an origin which can be adduced for it, there is, in my estimation, an unsurmountable difficulty, which I could wish that the maintainers of the doctrine would solve; as hitherto I have neither seen a solution attempted, nor the difficulty itself so much as noticed.—It is this: "*Son of God*" is an expression frequently to be met with in Scripture. But according

[1] St. Matt. xii. 18.

[2] See the original in all its strength, Phil. ii. 6. 7.

according to some, the true meaning of the expression is—that "the *second* person in the Trinity being *eternally begotten* by the *first* person, who, on that account, is called *Father*, is *thereby* the *Son of God*, and *God*, as he is *Son*." If so, then it follows —that "the *first* person, thus *eternally begetting* the *second*, who by *virtue of that generation* is *God*, must, by parity of reason, and communication of nature, be the FATHER——of GOD!! Now, I wish to know what good reason, or indeed if any reason, can be given, why the inspired writers, who are so often mentioning the *Father* in relation to the *Son*, never, in terminis, use this appellation, but always call him "*Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*," while at the same time, they assert Jesus Christ to be truly and really God? Being of the negative kind, which, I shall be told, "nihil concludit," I make no argument of this. But there is something awfully striking in it, which, to say the least, merits attention. And I much question, if the warmest abettors of *eternal generation* would venture to use the expression; although by all the rules of logic, it flows from their doctrine. The mind may conceive it possible, that *God* may have a *Son*, in some sense or other, *real* or *metaphorical*: but, as far as I can judge from what passes in my own mind, it does not appear to me, that any figure can give, or that any fancy can form, the least idea *how God can have a father*.

It is moreover observable, that St John, who uses the

the title "*Son of God*" more frequently than all his brother evangelists, yet in the admirable introduction to his Gospel, when he describes this great one, as God, under the characters of "*Logos*," *Life* "and *Light* of men," "the *Maker*," and "*Proprie-* "*tor of all things*," does not speak of him as Son, till he had informed us that the "Logos was "made flesh;" when he immediately brings in "the only begotten of his Father;" as if that designation had not belonged to him, till the grand event of his incarnation was accomplished [1].

[1] St John i. 1.——The sentiments contained in the foregoing passages were beautifully expressed in the following lines, composed by Mr. SKINNER, on this much agitated subject:

SOLUTIO THEOLOGICA DE FILIO DEI.

"Filius ille Dei Deus est quâ Filius," inquis,
Ergo Dei Deus est hac ratione Pater.
Sæpe Deum patrem sacra pagina nunciat; atqui
Nulla Patrem dicit pagina sacra Dei.
Si Deus est Pater, ut divina oracula dictant,
Quærendum cujus sit Pater ille, Deus.
Quem virgo peperit Deus est, non quatenus illum
Virgo parit, sed quâ substitit ipse Deus.
Ille Dei verbum, per quem sunt omnia facta,
Et per quem nova sunt omnia facta, Deus
Hîc Deus assumens hominem, et de virgine natus,
Filius est idem virginis atque Dei:
Sic Deus ingenitus, divino ex fœdere factus,
Filius inde Dei, qui fuit ante Deus.
Illum naturæ duplicis personâ in eâdem
Ignorant Clarki, Whistoniique Deum.
Tu Deus, hanc nobis, sine quâ spes nulla salutis,
Incipe, confirma, perfice, Christe, fidem.

There is however an addition [1] to this designation, which, on the assumption of its being part of the Baptist's testimony, is laid hold of to countenance, if not to prove, *eternal generation*—viz. "the "only begotten Son, who is—ὁ ὢν—in the bosom "of the Father," &c. This attestation created dispute even in the days of Origen, who, as quoted by Dr Grabe [2], attributed it to the Baptist; while Grabe tells us, that Chrysostom gave the attestation to the Evangelist. And, regarding this point, there still exists a difference of opinion. Dr Felton, one of the preachers at Lady Moyer's Lecture, sides with Origen [3]. On the other hand, Dr Grabe is of St Chrysostom's mind, as more agreeable to the context; while Dr Bennet of Colchester, in his Reply to Dr Clarke's fifty-five Propositions, thinks, that these words being spoken by the Evangelist, *after our Saviour's ascension*, are therefore applicable to the *humanity*. From all which it appears, that there is nothing in the attestation, which ought to militate against the observation already made—that St. John's failing to introduce the title "*only begotten of the Father*," until after he had informed us, "that the Word was made "flesh," seems to indicate that no such designation belonged to him, till the grand event of his incarnation was accomplished.

But the authority of the *Fathers* of the christian church

[1] St John i. 18.

[2] *Spicil.* tom. II. p. 88.

[3] Sermon VII.

church is that, by which the doctrine now under discussion is for the most part thought to be sufficiently supported—an authority highly respectable indeed, yet not to be compared with the authority of Scripture. Of the *latter*, for more than half a century, I have been endeavouring to obtain all the knowledge in my power; and *that*, not through the medium of *translation* only, but in the languages of antiquity—the *original Greek and Hebrew*. With the *former*, I cannot, in truth, boast such an intimate acquaintance. Yet, from what I have seen of the writings of the Fathers, (and to those, which are most esteemed, access, I bless God, has been open to me), I have been enabled to form some judgment of what they contain upon the subject, and to satisfy myself, at least, that the authority for the doctrine of "*eternal generation*," which they are held to afford, deserves not the respect which has been credulously allowed to it.

The first of the christian Fathers, whose writings have been pressed into the service of "authority," is the well-known and justly esteemed IGNATIUS of *Antioch*; a contemporary of the Apostles, and the immediate disciple of St. John. In the valuable collection of this holy martyr's epistles, with which the christian church is now blessed, we read as follows—"Εις Ἰατρος ἐστιν, σαρκικος τε και πνευματικος, "γεννητος και αγεννητος, εν σαρκι γενομενος Θεος και εν Μα- "ριας, και εκ Θεου[1]"—"*there is one physician, fleshly*

[1] Epis. to the Ephes.

" *and spiritual,* BEGOTTEN *and* NOT BEGOTTEN—*God* " *in flesh—both of Mary and of God.*" From its proximity to the Scripture æra, this is certainly, on the subject before us, a very striking and important passage. The words which deservedly excite notice are " γεννητος," and " αγεννητος ;" by Drs Wake and Waterland translated " MADE AND NOT MADE ;" by Dr Bull, in his " Defensio," &c. FACTUS ET NON FACTUS ; and by the French Abbé Fleuri, in his Ecclesiastical History, " ENGENDRÉ ET ETER- " NEL :" While the celebrated Whiston, alarmed at the word " αγεννητος," as destructive of the Arian tenets, and prejudiced, in common with the writers above named, in favour of the groundless maxim, " *that it is the known fundamental doctrine of christi-* " *anity,* that the Father alone is αγεννητος—*unbegot-* " *ten,*" boldly, but honestly, rejects the passage altogether, nay the whole epistle as spurious ! What is to be made of all this ? It is certainly speaking without proof, when these writers tell us, that " αγεν- " νητω" belongs *exclusively* to the Father ; and that *this* is a *known* fundamental doctrine of christianity ; when they could not but *know,* what every biblical linguist *knows,* that the word " αγεννητος" is not a scripture term ; but that it was first introduced into christian language by a worthy bishop and martyr, who was neither philosopher nor metaphysician, but who could and did apply the term in a way diametrically opposite to the *exclusive* application, for which they contend.

One

One would think, that the words of St Ignatius ought to be treated with a respect becoming the subject, and due to their justly valued author; and that they ought to have led posterior writers to look well to their theological systems, lest they should be found deviating from the language, the *unsophisticated* language, of this truly great man; who, we may fairly presume, would be guarded in his language, and not use a word, but what was strictly congenial with the stile and doctrine of Scripture, so very recently promulgated.

The Greek language has, in strictness of speech, no other appropriate term for "*generating*" or "*begetting*" but the verb "γενναω" and its derivatives. Thus, in the New Testament, it is, that the participles "γεννητος" and "γεννηθεις" are always used in the genuine radical sense of *begetting* or *bearing*; and, even in our translation, are never rendered otherwise, but in one passage; where the words of St Paul, "μετοχους γεννηθεντας" are translated "MADE *partakers*,[1]" but where the *radical sense* would have been fully as proper—"who have become "by *regeneration* partakers of the Holy Spirit,[2]." &c.

Yet Doctors Bull and Waterland have roundly asserted, that anciently the words "γεννητος," from γενναω, and "γενητος" from γινομαι, were promiscuously

[1] Heb. vi. 4.

[2] See in the original, St John iii. 5. γεννηθη εξ υδατος και πνευματος.

ly used. In proof of which, the latter, in one of his Sermons, and in another work [1], quotes the above passage of Ignatius, "γενητος και αγενητος;" although neither Bishop Bull nor he has attempted to inform us when this promiscuous use began. The assertion therefore, being unsupported, may be pronounced to be unfounded.

It is to be presumed, that the language of Ignatius would have a strict affinity to the language of the apostle St John. But the apostle distinguishes between the two verbs, inasmuch as he uses "γενναω" in a sense to which "γινομαι" will not apply: πας ὁ γεγεννημενος εκ τε Θεε[2], &c. And again, ὁτι παν το γεγεννημενον[3], &c. are passages, which no one will ever think of translating "*whosoever, or* "*whatsoever is* MADE *of God,*" &c. In after times, there are instances of the distinction, contended for, being strictly preserved. Thus, in his Apology, Athenagoras calls the Son of God "πρωτον γεννημα τω πατρι, ὀχ ως γενομενον;" which Dr BULL translates "*primogeniam patris progeniem, non quasi factum,*" "the first offspring of the Father, not as *being* "*made*;" and he argues from that distinction, which the apologist makes. Again, we read in the 'Apostolical Constitutions,' "γεννηθεντα ε κτισθεντα, *begotten* not *made*[4]. And even as far down as the Council of Nice, we find the distinction clear, "γεννηθεντα ε ποιηθεντα

[1] *Importance, &c.* [2] 1 St John iii. 9. [3] 1 St John v. 4.
[4] Lib. VII. c. 4.

ποιηθεντα—*begotten* not *made*," being one of the disputable clauses of the Nicene creed. Hence it is plain, that although *three* words were used to signify '*making*,' 'γινομαι,' 'κτιζω, 'ποιεω,' yet no other word was, in these days, known to signify '*generating*' or *begetting*,' but the solitary verb "γενναω."

This being the case, it appears to me not only dissonant from the usual idiom of a language, but a doing violence to any language, to force a word, which conveys *one particular meaning only*, to bear a *different* meaning; especially, when it is visible, that there are no fewer than *three* distinct vocables, by which this different meaning is already expressed. Such however is the violence done to the Greek verb 'γενναω' by Dr Bull. Nay, so strongly is he attached to the promiscuous use of the participles, "γεννητος" and "γενητος," or rather, so anxious is he to support his favourite hypothesis, that he will have the corresponding words in the Latin language, '*natus*' and '*factus*,' to be equally synonymous! Thus, in that passage of Tertullian, (so similar in every respect to the passage of St Ignatius, now under discussion)—"ita utriusque "substantiæ census hominem et deum exhibuit: "hinc *natum*, inde *non natum*: hinc *carneum*, inde "*spiritualem*[1]," &c.—"So the account of the two "substances exhibited the *man* and the *God*, on "the one side *born*, on the other side *not born*," &c.

[1] De carne Christi, cap. 4.

&c. Treating of which in his 'Defensio,' &c. the learned Bishop peremptorily says, that Tertullian behoved to mean "*factus et non factus—made and* "*not made!*" Yet, pace tanti viri, it is my opinion, that Dr BULL could not have pitched upon any of the Latin writers less favourable to such a meaning.

The design of Tertullian's exquisite little treatise, 'De carne Christi,' is to combat the creed of the Marcionites, and other early heretics, who maintained, that the flesh of Christ was not born of a woman, like our flesh, but was either brought down from heaven, or was *made* out of the stars by the way. With his wonted spirit, Tertullian argues against them, and proves, among a vast variety of topics, the certainty and necessity of a *proper, real human nativity,* from Psalm xxii. 9, 10. which he calls the words of "the "Lord speaking to God the Father."[1] But all the spirited reasoning of this learned and impressive writer would be worse than of no use—it would be in itself absurd, if "*natus,*" when used by him, simply signified "*factus.*" For Bishop Bull ought to have been aware, that, in all his writings, Tertullian purposely, as it were, distinguishes between '*natus*' and '*factus.*' Thus, in his book against Marcion, he describes God to be "summum mag-"num in eternitate constitutum, *innatum, infectum* "—not *born,* not *made.*"[2] Again, he says of the substance

[1] *De carne Christi,* cap. 14. [2] Contra Marcion. lib. I. cap. 3.

substance of God, "hanc invenies solam, *innatam*, "*infectam*, *solam eternam*"—alone, *unborn*, *unmade*, "and alone eternal;" separating, I think, by this palpable distinction, *birth* or *generation*, as well as *creation*, from *eternity*. Nay, for this distinction he is found still more pointedly to argue in his book 'De Anima[2];' for, disputing against the Platonic theory of the soul, he writes, "Et *natam* autem "docemus, et *factam* ex initii constitutione: nec "statim erravimus, utrumque dicentes, quia scilicet "aliud sit *natum*, aliud *factum*. It is not, however, the doctrine of this passage, but the language in which it is conceived, which merits notice; for it has only to be quoted, to do away the conceit, that the words '*natus*' and '*factus*' are, by Tertullian, used promiscuously.

On comparing therefore Ignatius with Tertullian, I think myself warranted, and hope there is neither *harm* nor *heterodoxy*, in explaining the *former* by the *latter*; and to the 'γεννητὸς καὶ ἀγεννητὸς' of the one, assigning the same radical meaning, the same doctrinal sense, as I am taught, by himself, to assign to the '*natus et non natus*' of the other. I have dwelt the longer upon (what I have no scruple to call) this *text* of Ignatius, which being so conformable to Scripture language, and so near to the Scripture æra, affords a sufficient foundation for the doctrine which I wish to raise from it.

[1] Contra Marcion. lib. I. cap. 5. [2] De Anima, cap. 2.

I have all along argued from the Medicean edition of St Ignatius's Epistles, first given to the world by the learned ISAAC VOSSIUS, afterwards adopted by the judicious USHER, nobly vindicated by the accurate PEARSON, and universally received, as the only genuine edition, by all the learned men whose opinions I have been now discussing. For, upon the footing of the Vossian, (as they all admit), being the true edition, I feel no hesitation in saying, that, as the language of '*eternal* generation' was *not* the language of St Ignatius, so the doctrine of '*eternal* generation' could *not* be the doctrine of that distinguished primitive writer. While, on the other hand, upon Mr Whiston's supposition, that the old and larger edition is the true one, and that this great man's epistles were, by the Athanasians, both abridged and altered, to prove the deity of Christ, I am, with equal confidence, ready to assert, that, without having recourse to the doctrine of '*eternal generation*' at all, this fundamental article of our faith—'God manifest in the flesh'—can be both proved, and defended.

LET-

LETTER IV.

NEXT to the epistles of St Ignatius, the "Apostolical Constitutions," as they have been unduly termed, are regarded by the advocates of 'eternal generation,' as countenancing that doctrine. In this huge bundle of 'utilia et inepta,' which seems to be a compilation by different hands, and at different periods, within the first three or four centuries, I do not deny, that frequent mention is made of a sort of 'eternal generation,' and that no small stress is laid on it. But the doctrine, as espoused by the author of the Constitutions, is found to be clogged with such additions and restrictions, as have caused its modern abettors to stumble not a little. For instance, in the article of the Creed, which treats of our Saviour, the author of the 'Constitutions' says—"I believe, and am "baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ, his only be-"gotten Son, the first-born of the whole creation "—τον προ αιωνων ευδοκια τϑ πατρϕ γεννηθεντα (ϑ κτισθεντα) "*begotten* before the ages by the good pleasure of "the Father—*not made*." This last expression Mr Whiston and the Arian party reject, as an interpolation. On the other hand, Dr Bull produces the words ϑ κτισθεντα, *not made*, when arguing against

Sandius, the Arian; and says, that they cannot be reconciled with his tenets, by any argument which does not deserve to be laughed at[1]. Yet Dr Bull omits 'γεννηθεντα ευδοκια τϑ πατρϕ'—"*Begotten by the good pleasure of the Father*;" probably for the reason, which the French Huguenot Daillé has assigned, when he calls this clause "durissima et ab "apostolicæ doctrinæ charactere aliena—most harsh "and contrary to the character of apostolic doc-"trine[2]:" a description just enough, if 'divine generation" be apostolic doctrine, and if it also be, as its maintainers say it is, *not voluntary*, but *natural* and *necessary*.

Again, in the draught of a liturgy, contained in the "Apostolical Constitutions," we meet with the following language—"αυτον δε πρϕ παντων αιωνων γεν-"νησας βϑλησει και δυναμει και αγαθοτητι," &c.—"Thou "didst beget him by thy *will* and *power*, and *good-*"*ness*, before all ages." Here the doctrine of *necessary* generation, of which I see not how, in any case, the mind can form an idea, is still more effectually combated. Accordingly we find the venerable Bishop Rattray omitting the words just quoted, in his valuable collection of ancient liturgies, for the following reason—"because the compiler of "the Apostolic Constitutions seems to me to have "so tampered with the long thanksgiving, that it is not

[1] Dr Bull, Defensio, &c. Sect. II. c. 3. § 6.

[2] De Pseudep. Apost. Lib. I.

" not easy to distinguish his additions and alterations " from what has been originally in it[1];" asserting in another place, " that these alterations appear to " have been made to serve an hypothesis, and to " make the liturgy more consistent with the Arian " scheme[2]."

I contend, however, that, if the 'Apostolical 'Constitutions' be thought worthy of being cited in defence of the doctrine of 'eternal generation,' they ought to be taken as they stand, without those purgations and restrictions to which they have been so liberally subjected. For it appears to me, upon my hypothesis, completely practicable, to adjust every " harsh " expression, which has offended the modern enemies of Arianism, and shew the language of the Constitutions to be both opposite to, and destructive of, the Arian scheme. Dr Bull and his friends acknowledge that the Ante-Nicene Fathers believed a " προελευσις—going forth " of the Logos " προ των αιωνων—before the ages." This they called a " γεννησις—*generation*," and took it, among other acceptations, to be a prelude of the promised incarnation. May not this 'γεννησις—*generation*,' therefore, be very properly ascribed to the " ευδοκια πατρος—the good pleasure of the Father?" " συ ει ὁ υἱος " μου ὁ αγαπητος, εν σοι ἠυδοκησα[3]—" Thou art my be- " loved Son, in thee I am well pleased," being the very

[1] See the Ancient Lit. &c. p. 11. [2] Preface to Ditto, Note p. 6.
[3] St. Luke iii. 22.

very language of heaven, out of which, as the espousers of the doctrines of Arius cannot draw any inference, which can give authority to these doctrines, so cannot the espouser of *eternal*—that is, *essential*—generation, draw any inference corroborative of such a tenet.

But from the "Apostolical Constitutions," where there appears to me to be little decisive on either side, the next step of enquiry brings us to the COUNCIL of NICE, that venerable convocation of Bishops, many of whom had been *confessors* for the faith under the recent persecutions, and all of them were now assembled from every part of the christian world, by the indulgence of their respective civil rulers, in order to settle the government, regulate the discipline, and declare the faith of the christian church. The Creed, composed by this numerous assembly, and published under its authority, has been very properly, and almost universally, received as the standard of what is called *orthodoxy*; and, under this character, has been boldly laid claim to, as teaching, in the article of our Lord Jesus Christ, none other doctrine than the doctrine of "eternal generation." Before, however, proceeding to discuss this claim, I have some preliminary observations to make, not unworthy, I trust, of the theological student's notice.

The members of the Nicene Council, be it remembered, were placed in a most embarassing predicament—gathered, as they were, from all quarters of

of the then known world, personal strangers, for the most part, to each other, and in a great measure unacquainted with each other's language. It is therefore but reasonable to allow, that, although they had been all of one mind respecting the fundamental doctrines of christianity, (as indeed the far greater number of them were), they might differ in the mode of delivering their sentiments of these doctrines, and of no one doctrine more readily, than that high and inexplicable mystery—*a Trinity in Unity*. Let it also be remembered, what a "legion" of heresies had, under various names, and with opposite views, infested the church, from the very days of the Apostles, down to that period; and that to combat the nonsensical errors of some of these heresies, without approaching, as it were, to the borders of others, was no easy matter for pious and well-meaning men, unacquainted with metaphysical distinctions, and *scholastic niceties*, that great bane of after times. In proof of this, I need only mention what is recorded of Dionysius of Alexandria, no mean man in ecclesiastical history, that, in disputing against the doctrine of Sabellius, then growing prevalent, he incautiously dropped some expressions, savouring of what was afterwards termed *Arianism*; for which expressions he was immediately reprehended by his brother Dionysius of Rome. "Incidit in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim," though a trite adage, is certainly a just one: as our own experience shews, that many, in shunning

ning the *rock* of superstition, have plunged themselves into the *gulf* of infidelity.

I might also bring to mind, the general ignorance of the language of the Old Testament, which prevailed in these early days, and the insufficiency of the Greek language, in which the Nicene creed is composed, fully to express the distinctive energy of the Hebrew, in descriptions of Deity, as well as the difficulty of adjusting the Greek *idiom* to the *idiom* of the several dialects that were then current in the christian world. For these and other obvious reasons, the only cause of wonder is, that, under so many and so great disadvantages, the Nicene creed should be what it is: not indeed what a fastidious critic would call an accurate, orderly, and well digested composition; but a composition which, when candidly viewed, and with no eye to a particular system of opinion, must be acknowledged to be sufficiently adequate to the great object of refuting all antecedent heresies—more especially of establishing the *real* distinction of Persons against Sabellius, and the *perfect* equality of Nature against Arius—the two chief, and most dangerous of the whole heretical tribes.

Having made these preliminary observations, and being desirous, that this, the great object of the Creed drawn up by the Council of Nice, should be kept in view, I proceed, in the following letter, to examine, whether there be any thing in it, so decisive

cisive of the doctrine of eternal generation, as to constitute that doctrine, a necessary point of the christian faith.

LETTER V.

THE first clause of the 'Nicene Creed,' descriptive of the "one Lord Jesus Christ," viz. "*the only begotten Son of God*," has been considered already; and the appropriation of it to our Saviour's *divine nature* shewn to be unwarranted[1]. The words which follow, "*begotten of his Father be-*" *fore all worlds*," are *adopted* only, not originally *framed* by the authors of the creed. For we find them in the 'Apostolical Constitutions,' and hence transferred into every creed, to which Arian principles gave birth. And Arians, however erroneous in doctrine, yet being not defective in penetration, could never, in conformity with their principles, either use, or admit the words "begotten of his Fa-

[1] Letter II. p. 14.

"ther before all worlds," in the high sense of *eternity*, which has been ascribed to them. Neither is it likely, that the Council would attach the first importance to, or lay much stress upon, a form of expression, to which their adversaries gave so hearty assent; although, knowing that it could bear a construction quite different from the Arian system, and quite reconcileable to their own faith, they might make use of it for the sake of peace and unanimity.

There is, however, one circumstance attending the words "begotten of his Father before all "worlds," which requires to be accounted for. In the first draught of a creed, exhibited in the Council of Nice, there was the following addition to the above words, "τουτ' εστι εκ της ουσιας του πατρος— *that is to say, of the substance of the Father.*" This is explicit, and had it been permitted to remain, would have determined the question. But the Fathers, it seems, had not thought it agreeable either to Scripture or tradition; for which reason it was rejected: and there is nothing in the clause, as it now stands, however solemnly and sincerely I profess my reception of it, and of the Nicene Creed at large, which requires me to believe that "be-"gotten of his Father before all worlds," is of the same import with "ETERNALLY BEGOTTEN." The source of all the perplexity and difference of opinion on this subject seems to be, the affixing the word *begotten* the modern idea of production to being, and applying that to the Deity

with the addition of *eternal*, to make it sound the better. If we consult Scripture for the meaning of this word, besides this common use of it, we shall find it frequently applied to objects already in being[1], and therefore signifying not a *production into being*, but a *change of condition* in the *being already existing*. A few hints on the subject will shew how this use of the word may be applied to the Nicene Creed.

In the *first* place, it will be allowed, that there is a *generation* or *begetting* belonging to Christ, as a præexistent being; by virtue of which it is said, and we do not stumble at the expression, that God was born of a woman, and the woman that bore him is called the mother of God. If then being *begotten* or *born* (the word for both is the same in Greek) of a mother, be not contrary to his præexistence as God, may not what is said of him in the creed, when stript of modern limitations, be allowed to carry the same latitude, and imply a præexistence too? I mention this only by way of analogy, and would ask, in the *second* place, what we believe to be the great object of divine revelation, as contained in the Bible? The answer, I hope, will be, that it is the gracious and glorious plan of redemption or recovery to fallen man, and a comfortable description, at sundry times, and in divers manners, of the *Blessed One*, by whom this great

[illegible]

[illegible]d, though we read it *born*, [illegible]d), 1 St Pet. i. 3. 1 St [illegible]xii. 7.

great work, a work far above the ability of any creature, was, by divine agreement, to be accomplished. Taking this for granted, which could easily be proved, I am inclined to think, (for the honour of the compilers), that the early creeds were in general composed with a view to this gracious scheme of salvation, and designed not so much to describe how the Persons in Deity are in their nature related to one another, as how they stand officially with respect to the plan of man's redemption. Hence it is, that most of these creeds are particularly full and copious in what relates to the character of the Redeemer, and point out very circumstantially the various stages of his progress in that interesting character. It was this work of redemption, as predicted before, and accomplished by, his incarnation, that these early writers seem to have had in their eye, and to have described in conformity to the Scripture style, for the instruction of the faithful. This is what we always find the Apostolic Fathers most zealous in inculcating, before philosophy crept into the church, and confounded the faith of christians with intricate disquisitions. If then, it shall be asked, Why is the Redeemer said to be "begotten of his Father before all worlds?" I answer—in relation to his office as Redeemer, not to his origin as God. And if it shall still be asked, What connection there is between being *begotten*, and the work of redemption? It is enough to say—that this is the style of Scripture, made use of in

in terms of the antemundane covenant among the co-eternal Three, whereby the præexistent person of the Redeemer should be, or was to be begotten of God (γενηθεις εκ Θεϑ) into that office, and so to become the μονογενης, the only begotten,—as the præ-existent persons of the redeemed are to *be begotten of God* [1] into the benefits of that office, and thereby become brethren to that first-born [2]. Thus we find him early held forth, as the seed of the woman, and the first mother thought he was come, as soon as a Son was born—"I have got a man," said she, (not *from*, but) "the very Jehovah [3]." There seems to be an analogy between the fall and the redemption, in many particulars, and especially in what appear to be the effects of both. "For "since by *man* was death, by *man* shall be also "the resurrection of the dead [4]." And the word *begotten*, as applicable in the one case, is in terms of this analogy applied to the other.

But still it may be asked—Why "begotten be-"fore all worlds?" I answer—either to indicate that He, who was before all worlds, was begotten, or to be begotten into the office of man's Redeemer; or, more pointedly to signify, that, having undertaken that office before the creation of the world, he was pleased to assume some appearance or figure of

[1] See the Texts above quoted. [2] Heb. ii. 11, 12. 17.
[3] Gen. iv. 1. See Ps. ii. 7. cx. 3. Prov. viii. 22—32. Isa. ix. 6. &c.
[4] 1 Cor. xv. 21, &c.

of what he was really to be, when he came to execute it. It is certain, that the Scripture speaks of the scheme of redemption, as having been præconcerted among the Persons in Jehovah "before "the world began[1];" in pursuance of which scheme of mercy, the Logos did assume some sort of human appearance, and thereby became that Image of God, after which man was formed. Hence St Paul calls him "the image of the invisible "God[2];" which expression does not suit so well with the idea of Deity, even with the strange idea of *derived* Deity, as with the idea of something assumed by Deity, to constitute that character; in which view the apostle immediately after calls him "πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως—the first-born of all the "creation," which seems to be much of the same import with "begotten before all worlds."

Those however who assert that these words imply *eternal generation*, and the derivation of Christ's *divine nature*, will insist, that this sense of them is confirmed by the words which immediately follow in the creed, and are thought to be explicit on this head.—"Θεος εκ Θεου—*God of God*." But why not allow St Ignatius' beautiful antithesis to expound this part of our Saviour's character "γεννη-"τος και αγεννητος, εν σαρκι γενομενος ΘΕΟΣ—και εκ Μα-"ριας, και ΕΚ ΘΕΟΥ, the begotten—of Mary, the "unbegotten—of God?" Thus the Θεος εκ Θεου—"*God*

[1] Titus i. 2. [2] Col. i. 15.

"*God of God*" is introduced with a reference to the "γενομενον εν σαρκι—his appearing in a body of "flesh—εκ Μαριας, of Mary." Nay, should this exposition be thought either weak or forced, our Saviour himself has afforded one, against which no such objection can be urged—"Εγω εκ του Θεου εξηλθον,—I "proceeded forth *from* God," say our translators [1]; and these subsequent passages shew the translation to be correct; "εγω παρα του Θεου εξηλθον—εξηλθον "παρα του πατρος—I came out from God—I came "forth from the Father [2]:" And again, "thou "camest forth 'απο Θεου' from God [3]." Thus, in the Gospel of St John, three different prepositions are used, 'εκ Θεου,' 'παρα Θεου,' and 'απο Θεου,' but all translated, and properly translated, '*from* God.' Why not then give "Θεος εκ Θεου," in the creed, the same rendering, "*God* FROM GOD," according to our Saviour's own interpretation of it, in these words, "I *came forth from* the father, and *am come* "into the world"—again, "I *leave* the world, and "*go to the Father* [4]."

It seldom happens, that the Latin language is found to be more copious than the Greek; yet, when

[1] St John viii. 42. [2] St John xvi. 27, 28. [3] Ib. 30.

[4] It may well be asked, Why "Θεος εκ Θεου—God of God" should be thought to imply a derivation of Essence, when the preposition εκ is so often applied in a different sense? The unbelieving Jews are said (John viii. 44) to be "εκ του διαβολου—of their father the devil;" surely not of his substance, wicked as they were. Every faithful christian is said to be born or begotten εκ Θεου of God. See 1 John v. i. already referred to, with many other passages to the same purpose.

when we come to treat of the next clause to 'Θεος 'εκ Θεϑ,' in the Nicene Creed, we find the Latin translation more significant than the Greek original. "Φως εκ φωτος—light of light," carries with it no very clear idea; whereas "LUMEN EX LUCE" makes an impression even on a schoolboy's mind; and to the biblical scholar suggests at once the corresponding expression of St Paul, "απαυγασμα της δοξης—the "EFFULGENCE of the GLORY[1]."

I know, that the simile 'of one *light, lighted* up 'by another light', is familiar language among the christian Fathers. But, though Dr Bull himself uses it, he recommends to us caution in the use of it[2].

The last clause in this admirable creed, which points at generation, is the following, "γενηθεντα ϑ "ποιηθεντα—begotten, not made." It is not however said "*eternally begotten*, not made." So far from it, that,

[1] Heb. i. 3.

[2] In Grabe's Spicil. vol. II. p. 199. I find a fragment of a book o Justin Martyr's on the Trinity, where the simile of the *Sun* and *Light* is applied to the *hypostatic Union*, which entirely spoils the allusion, attributed to the φως εκ φωτος in the creed. And it may be worthy of remark, that, in his treatise, "De differ. Essent. et Hypost." St Basil represents the whole Trinity by a *rainbow*—"as the substance of a rain-"bow, which shines with different colours, is one, but the colours "many, (he might, I believe, have said *three*); so, in one common sub-"stance, do shine forth the distinguishing properties of each person. Qu. 1. Does one colour *beget* another? Qu. 2. Might not this simile of St Basil's illustrate, and be illustrated by Gen. ix. 13.—"God's "*bow for a token*?"

that, in my opinion, the expression is simply descriptive of our Saviour's incarnation, in terms of the angel's address, "the Holy Ghost shall come "upon thee, and the power of the highest shall "overshadow thee[1]," &c. For Jesus, or the last Adam, was "the Son of God," as being "το 'αγιον γεν- "νωμενον—the holy thing begotten or born[2]." The first Adam was the "Son of God"—ποιηθεις, having been made or created so[3].

Hitherto we have met with nothing in the Nicene creed enjoining the belief of an eternal generation, in order to prove the eternal Deity of the "One Lord Jesus Christ:" nothing but what the cunning impugners of his Deity held themselves at liberty to avow, and fancied they could warp to their own delirious impiety. Of this the Nicene Fathers were abundantly sensible; and therefore, to meet, or rather outwit, the chicanery of the heretics, and bring the contest to a final issue, they at once introduced an unequivocal and decisive expression, and declared the 'One Lord Jesus Christ' to be "'ομοσιον τω πατρι,"—*consubstantial*, or "of one "substance with the Father." This was a home-thrust, the force of which, although not to be parried, the Arians fell upon a shift to elude. By the insertion of an ι, or iota, they formed a word of similar sound, "'ομοιουσιον—*like* in substance," and

 this

[1] St Luke i. 35. [2] See in the original, St. Luke i. 35.
[3] St Luke iii. 38.

this they thought would pass undiscovered, and sufficiently answer their end. But the catholic bishops saw through the fallacy, and would not admit the insertion of this 'jot or tittle,' nor come to any terms with the Arians, without their receiving and professing the ὁμοούσιον, "CONSUBSTANTIAL" doctrine, to its full and literal extent. This they would *not do*, nor have, to this day, ever done. Here therefore stands the criterion of *orthodox* and *catholic* faith. It is the "*consubstantiality*," that is, "the "unity or sameness of substance," which forms that criterion, not the 'γεννησις,' the 'generation,' or 'begetting,' which merely respected the *personal*, not *essential* character of the "One Lord," &c. And this '*consubstantiality*,' though *naturally* flowing from 'generation,' if admissible in Deity, yet certainly does not depend upon it, but can be properly enough conceived without it. "Tres autem "unius substantiæ, et unius status, et unius potes-"tatis," says Tertullian, "quia unus Deus, ex quo "et gradus isti et formæ et species, in nomine Pa-"tris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, deputantur."—The "*Three* are of *One* substance (Consubstantial—ὁμο-"ουσιοι) and of one state and of one power, because "there is one God (Jehovah), from whom (Θεος εκ "Θεου) these steps, and forms, and species, are reck-"oned, under the denomination of Father, and "Son, and Holy Ghost." (Aleim)[s]. Without at present enlarging on this elucidation, I think it suf-

[s] See Lib. contra Prax. cap. 2.

sufficiently evident, that Jesus Christ, 'the one Lord, may be consubstantial with the Father, as well by being God of himself, as by being *necessarily* begotten of the substance of the Father. Neither does this lead to Tritheism; because there is a difference between *substance* and subsistence, between ουσια and ὑποστασις, and we may believe that there are three subsistences in one substance, without thinking it necessary that one subsistence should be derived from another.

Before I have done with the Nicene Creed, I have one observation to make, which I think of very considerable weight, in discussing the subject. To the creed, when about to be promulgated, the Council affixed their synodical anathema, in name of the Holy Catholic Church, against any, who, among other expressions derogatory to the Deity of Christ, should say, that "πριν γεννηθηναι ουκ ην—*before he was begotten he was not.*" Now, the heresy here, to which the anathema attaches, is certainly—'*the denying* his existence before generation.' For this denial was the origin, and is, to this hour, the distinguishing tenet of the Arian reformers—in other words, the *Socinians*. But, by all the rules of logic, the reverse of this *censurable*, not to say, *damnable* position, must be the Catholic truth; viz. that "πριν γεννηθηναι ην," BEFORE HE WAS BEGOTTEN HE EXISTED. It is therefore impossible, that by the expression 'γεννηθηναι', the Council of Nice could mean '*eternally* begotten;' since

if they so meant, they must have required every catholic christian to say, that the '*eternally begotten* '*Son existed before eternity.*' A dilemma this, into which, if we are disposed to allow the Nicene Fathers even common sense, they never could have fallen; but on which it is unnecessary to enlarge, since every attempt to evade it, must, if words have any meaning, be, upon examination, found so lame, as to be wholly unworthy of regard.

LETTER VI.

HAVING discussed the Council and Creed of Nice, and as yet found nothing expressly, and *in terminis*, definitive of "Eternal Generation," I am, however, well aware, and most ready to acknowledge, that from the Nicene æra, the doctrine did creep into the christian church, through heat of controversy, and through the eagerness of one party to defend itself against the other; until, under the sanction of papal infallibility, it mounted, at last, to its modern height of importance.

Nay,

Nay more, I have no hesitation to join so far with the supporters of this doctrine, as to express my firm belief, that Athanasius himself, (who, though but a deacon, was present in the Council of Nice), was, if not the first assertor of 'eternal ge-'neration,' the great patron and propagator of it—affording, by his example and influence, as Patriarch of Alexandria, and as an eminent sufferer in the catholic cause, a distinguished precedent to all that should afterwards engage in this thorny controversy. In proof of his zeal for the doctrine now under discussion, it is matter of fact, that Athanasius did quote (and perhaps was the first to quote) "γενητος και αγενητος," as the words of St Ignatius; and that he thus did argue from the misquotation —"the blessed Ignatius called him MADE, because "of the flesh, for Christ (he should have said the "'LOGOS' which makes a material difference) was "*made flesh*, and NOT MADE because he was not of "the creatures, that are *made*, but υιος εκ πατρος, the "Son from the Father."

The passage is produced by Bishop Pearson[1], in proof of the genuineness of the *Vossian* epistles. This undoubtedly, in so far, is clear enough; but how far the words of Athanasius are consonant to the Martyr's language or meaning, remains to be proved. The freedom, which Athanasius however used, was not long of being extended. For, in the next,

[1] See Vindiciæ, Part I. p. 9.

next century, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, an ecclesiastical historian, having occasion to quote the words of Ignatius, and finding 'αγεννητῳ' applied to Christ, which, in the sense of '*unbegotten*,' (admitted by himself to be the proper sense), he saw, would not comport with the current doctrine of the age, he is hardy enough to read the passage 'γεννητῳ εξ αγεν-' νητω—BEGOTTEN OF THE UNBEGOTTEN.' But at this the reader will cease to wonder, when he finds so accurate a writer as Bishop Pearson saying, "that "this sentence of Theodoret's is found in the epistle "to the Ephesians to this day[x]."

In the same century with Theodoret lived Pope Gelasius, the first Latin writer perhaps, who, in conformity with Athanasian usage, if not in imitation of it, renders the Greek of St Ignatius, into the Latin '*factus et non factus*—made and not made. And it would seem to me, as if his *papal* authority had granted warrant to all succeeding ages, to adhere to this rendering, as the true one. Be this as it may, it is easy to see, how prevalent the influence of Athanasius afterwards became, and how studiously all his writings are both composed and quoted, with a view to the scheme of 'eternal generation.' Yet, it is owned by Bishop Pearson, that Athanasius acknowledges Christ to be called 'αγεν-' νητῳ' by Ignatius, (why then did he quote αγεννητος, as his language?) but that others after Ignatius, spoke

[x] See Vindiciæ, p. 12.

spoke otherwise; and, that although Athanasius disputed much with the Arians about αγεννητος, he never himself quotes Ignatius in the argument, having laid it down as a fundamental position, that "εν το αγεννητον, ὁ πατηρ—there is one unbegotten, "even the Father[1]." Thus expressed, the position to every Greek scholar must appear not a little strange, more especially, when he takes into account the immediate design of it. Had this fundamental position been couched in the masculine gender, "εις ὁ αγεννητος, ὁ πατηρ," like the text in the gospel of St Mark, so eagerly claimed by our modern Arians "ουδεις αγαθος, ει μη εις, ὁ Θεος—there is none "good but one, that is God[2]," it would have better served the purpose so much triumphed in, of restraining the '*unbegotten*' to the person of the Father. But in the neuter form, in which the position is stated, Scripture authority warrants me to extend it beyond the person of the Father, "Εγω και "ὁ πατηρ εν εσμεν—ego et pater UNUM sumus—I and "my Father are one;[3]" nay even to the whole Trinity, if that other text of St John be acknowledged genuine, "ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι—hi tres UNUM sunt—"these three are one[4]." Nor is the extension, thus scripturally authorized, unwarranted by Athanasius himself, if credit be due to the following source of information. I have in my possession four dialogues, ascribed to Athanasius, and translated

[1] See Vindiciæ, p. 126, 127. [2] St Mark x. 18.
[3] St John x. 30. [4] 1 St John v. 7.

lated by Beza, in which I find, among many quiddities, and perplexing distinctions of the schools, sundry things, which if I did understand, I cannot reconcile one with another. Yet, if the translation be just, (for which, as I am not inclined to give implicit faith to modern translations of the Fathers, I dare not vouch) in his first dialogue with the Anomæans, (a sect of Arians), on the he- "retics asking, is not '*το αγεννητον*—ingenitum—*un-* "'*begotten*' proper to the Father?" Athanasius makes answer, "*It is not,*" and adduces, for a proof, the Holy Ghost himself.

But the time having now arrived, when the doctrine of 'eternal generation' had become the subject of much altercation and explication, there arose a curious question, which has occasioned no small controversy ever since. The question is this, "*Un-* "*de et quomodo fluit hæc generatio, an ex natura an ex* "*persona?*—Whence flows this generation? does it "flow from *nature* or from *person?*"

Athanasius had laid it down as another fundamental position, that "Father is the property of Fa- "ther, Son of Son, and Spirit of Spirit[1]," of which, not to call it a mere gratis dictum, I shall only say, Quid explicat? From this position he argues, that the "property of the *hypostasis* of the Father, is *Father,*" &c.; and that, by *hypostasis,* he means what we term *Person,* is plain, from his telling us, in

[1] See the above quoted Dialogues, Dial. I.

in the same place, that "Essence is common to "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and therefore we "say—*One essence, three hypostases.*"

But he had said before, and he repeats it again, and again, that the *Son* is *Son*, "by being *genitus* "ex hypostasi—begotten of the hypostasis:" and even with this peculiar addition, "ex utero—from "the *womb* of the hypostasis." This idea he had derived from the Septuagint translation of the third verse of the hundredth and tenth psalm—"εκ γαστρος προ εωσφορου εγεννησα σε:" which translation Jerom has followed, "*ex utero ante luciferum genui te*—from "the womb, before the morning, I have begotten "thee." Yet as the original gives no countenance to the active "εγεννησα," I cannot help thinking our English translation preferable to both—"the dew of "thy birth is of the womb of the morning;" or, as in the new translation, "from the womb of the "morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth"—מרחם משחר לך טל ילדתך. Yet upon the corrupt rendering of the Septuagint, it is, that Athanasius reasons with his adversary; applying the רחם—"womb," *to the hypostasis of the Father*, without any warrant from Scripture whatever[1]. Nay, he makes this application the great mark of distinction between the modus of the Son, and that of the Holy

 Ghost,

[1] In Psalm xxii. 9, 10. we find the Son speaking thus: "Thou art "he that took me out of my *mother's* womb;" but we nowhere read "of the womb of the Father;" nor does the Septuagint or Jerom make any such exclusive restriction in their translations of Psalm cx. 3.

Ghost, that the Son is "ex utero—*from the womb*," and the Spirit, "ex ore—*from the mouth*;" with this, not very logical, explication, that "womb" expresses "generandi vim—the *power* of *generation*:" and "mouth," "docendi facultatem—the *faculty* of "*teaching*."

All this however rests on the faith of Beza's translation, which must be my apology, if I shall be found to have done injustice to the *great* Athanasius. My reason for the above observations is simply to shew, that his solution of the question, "unde et quomodo fluit hæc generatio," &c. attributes 'generation,' to the hypostasis or person of the Father; although, in another place, he contradicts himself, and expressly says, "We therefore "believe him to be the only begotten Son—quia "*unicus* ipse, ut antea diximus, *ex essentia genitus est* "—because he *only*, as we have before said, *is be*-"*gotten of the Essence*.[1]" On the supposition therefore, that Beza has done him *justice*, it can be no *injustice* to Athanasius' memory, for me to say, that the "unde et quomodo fluit hæc generatio, an ex "natura, an ex persona?" is ascribed at one time, by him, to the *essence* or 'nature,' at another to the *hypostasis* or 'person;' and therefore that no authority whatever attaches to his solution.

The case however is otherwise with one, who flourished

[1] See Dial. II.

flourished at no great distance of time from Athanasius, the celebrated Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who, in answer to the Arian inference, which has only a semblance of weight, "that the Son, being "*begotten*, cannot be of the same nature with the "Father, who is *unbegotten*," says, "that the distinction of *begotten* and *unbegotten*, belongs not to "the *nature*, but to the *person* [1]."

If, however, the ancients were of different opinions, as to the "unde et quomodo" of '*generation*,' the moderns are not free from the charge of equal diversity on the same subject. Dr Felton, one of the preachers at Lady Moyer's lecture, writes thus: "He is the Son, not of the Deity, or divine "essence at large, for *that* neither *begetteth*, nor "is *begotten*, but of the Father, in that essence, "who begetteth the Son also in the same [2]." Dr Bull, on the other hand, maintains, "that the divine *essence* is generated;" and, quoting Luther and Melancthon, as condemning the contrary opinion, calls it, further, *Sabellianism*, to say that, "it "is the *person* only that generates, and is generated [3]."

Having no desire to espouse either side of the question, I feel unconcerned in the sad contrariety of sentiment, to which it has given birth. My view

[1] De Incarnatione, ch. 9. n. 97. [2] See Sermons, Serm. VI.

[3] Defensio, Sect. 4. c. 1. § 7. 9.

of the matter is, that, as the question can be, and has been expounded by learned and good men, both ancient and modern, in such jarring, and oftentimes to me unintelligible, senses—it is no better than the puzzling consequence of an ambiguous doctrine; not, in my estimation, fairly deducible from the language of Scripture, and therefore not worthy of the theological student's regard. Indeed from the knowledge which, on this subject, my circumscribed course of study has afforded me, I have been led to commiserate the christian church, especially the Grecian part of it, throughout the whole of the fourth century; delivered, it is true, from those dreadful persecutions, with which, for three hundred years, its members had been assailed: but, what was more calamitous and vexatious, attacked now in the fundamentals of "the "faith once delivered to the Saints," by the boldest, and most ingeniously supported heresy which had ever appeared: while, alas! that faith was necessarily to be defended by a *new* sort of metaphysical argumentation, which the subtlety of enemies, more than the inclination of friends, or the nature of the subject itself, had introduced. Often did I wonder how the original faith, in the article of our Saviour's *Deity*, had been preserved, during this period of scholastic disputation; until I met with an observation, made, if I remember well, by Hilary of Poictiers, a contemporary writer, who ascribes its preservation, amidst the fierceness of *clerical* wrang-

wrangling, to *indisposition or incapacity*, on the part of the *laity*, to enter into the merits of the contest—insomuch, that by them (the laity) was the primitive and unadulterated faith retained, as exhibited in the record of Scripture, and handed down, by a successive tradition, through purer and simpler times.

But, whether the merit of this observation does, or does not attach to Hilary, I cannot refrain from laying before the reader the following animated declaration, confessedly made by that great man—"I "take the Lord of heaven and earth to witness, that "without having heard either the one or the other, "I have always believed both; that by 'HOMOIOU-"'SIOS,' we must understand 'HOMOOUSIOS;' be-"cause nothing can be *like*, according to nature, "which is not of the *same* nature. Baptized of "a long time, and having been a bishop a good "while, I have not heard the *faith* of *Nice* spoken "of, till upon the point of my exile; but the *gos-"pels* and *writings* OF THE APOSTLES have given me "the meaning of these terms[1]." The exile of which he here speaks, took place in the year 356, when he was banished from Poictiers in France, to Phrygia in Asia; where he manfully supported the catholic

[1] See Hilar. de Synodis.—which book he wrote, while the jangling about "*homoiousios*,' *of like substance*, and '*homoousios*,' *of the same substance*, was on foot; and while the fluctuating principles of the Emperor Constantius were displayed, in harassing the bishops, on both sides, with Synods here and there, to little purpose.

catholic cause for four years. At last the Arians, to be rid of such a troublesome stranger, got him sent back to his own diocese. Now this happened thirty years after the Council of Nice; during which period, however, it seems no less strange than true, that the Nicene creed had not been promulgated in France! This were almost incredible, if not duly attested by a man of such worth and known veracity as Hilary. Perhaps his words may be construed to a meaning different from what I have assigned to them; yet the conclusion of his declaration must still be allowed to have but one meaning and construction: viz. that the belief of the *real* Deity of Jesus Christ may be learned from the Gospels and writings of the apostles, without any critical enlargement, or subtle definition of its particular mode [1].

[1] It may here be remarked, that Hilary, during his four years converse among Greeks, seems to have adopted somewhat of their modes of expression. Thus, in his work de Trinitate, we find two new-coined vocables—"*nascibilitas*," and "*innascibilitas*," answering exactly to the Greek γεννητις, and αγεννησια; although from the idiom of the Latin, not so liable to subtilizing as the Greek terms.

LET-

LETTER VII.

IN the fourth century, the age of *controversial* persecution, flourished *Photinus*, bishop of Sirmium. Although the accounts which we have of him, and of his doctrines, are both various and contradictory, it seems proper, (as his authority, on the subject under discussion, has been sometimes appealed to), that he should not be passed over in silence. Abbé Fleury, in his Church History, charges him with espousing and blending together the errors of Sabellius and Samosatenus. Mr Collier, in his Dictionary, does the same. On the other hand, Bishop Stillingfleet, in his Vindication of the doctrine of the Trinity, gives a very different representation of Photinus's principles. For he adduces four respectable authorities, in proof of what Photinus held, on the subject of our blessed Saviour. 1st, He adduces Athanasius, as asserting that Photinus' belief was, "that the Logos was before all ages, but not Christ, "or the Son of God; which divine word was part-"ly *internal*, and so was ever with God, and part-"ly *external*, when it was communicated to the per-"son of Christ, whereby he became the Son of "God."

"God[1]." 2dly. He adduces Epiphanius, attesting Photinus to have said: "In the beginning was "the *Word*, but not the *Son*, which title was pro- "mised and foretold, but did not belong to Christ, "till he was born of the Holy Ghost and Mary." 3dly, He adduces the historian Socrates, as relating "that Photinus asserted the præexistence of the "Logos, and inhabitation in Christ from his con- "ception." And lastly, he adduces Hilary, as describing Photinus to have said, "that the divine "word, inhabiting in Christ, made him to be the "*real* Son of God." From all which, Bishop Stillingfleet concludes, that Photinus did not deny either the præexistence, or consubstantiality of the Logos, but only his being the Son of God, until Christ was born, in whom he dwelt.

This comports exactly with the account which Pope Leo, who flourished about the middle of the next century after Photinus, gives of him, as quoted by Bishop Pearson, in his Exposition of the Creed: viz. "that Photinus confessed Christ to be "true man, and of our substance, but did not be- "lieve him to be "*God of God—begotten before all "ages.*"

[1] The language, which Athanasius here ascribes to Photinus, is exactly conformable to the well-known distinction of Λογος ενδιαθετος, and Λογος προφορικος—"the Logos internal, and the Logos external," to be met with in some of the Ante-Nicene writings; (I think in Theophilus of Antioch, for one), and which, I remember to have seen, many years ago, handled and explained very correctly, in a publication of Lord Monboddo's.

"*ages.*" The accounts of this man's condemnation are no less various than those of his doctrine. The most authentic account, however, seems to be this: that he was first condemned in that Synod, at Antioch, which condemned Athanasius; afterwards by the Council of Sardica, anno 347, (as Bishop Pearson and Dr Berryman inform us; although Bishop Stillingfleet says, it was by the Arian Separatists at Philippopolis), and again, by a Synod of Western Bishops, at his own city Sirmium. But this condemnation not taking effect, on account of his people's love and attachment to him[1], when the Arians, anno 351, had got the sole management of Constantius, another Synod was held at Sirmium, in which he was once more deposed, and forcibly driven out of the city.

It may prove of some interest to the reader, to be informed, how strangely this last condemnation of the bishop of Sirmium is spoken of by two writers of considerable repute, Dr Berryman and Bishop Pearson. Dr Berryman says, "The Arians *themselves* were so offended at the grossness of his positions, that they deposed him, and confuted him in a

 "solemn

[1] This attachment it is no difficult matter to account for, when we hear Vincentius Lirinensis, who was nowise friendly to Photinus, describing him as "et ingenii viribus valens, et doctrinæ opibus excellens, "et eloquio præpotens—a man of great talent, rich in learning, and of "powerful eloquence." Yet was he nick-named *Scotinus* by a certain class of wits, from *scotos*, "darkness," instead of *Photinus*, from *photos*, "light!" Somewhat similar to Mr Whiston's corruption of *Athanasius*, viz. *Sathanasius*.

"solemn disputation." Bishop Pearson says, "they "all agreed *suddenly* in the condemnation of him, "Arians, Semiarians, and Catholics; and that, be- "ing convicted by Basil, bishop of Ancyra, he "was banished from Sirmium." But the good bishop has omitted to inform his readers of one circumstance, agreed in by all contemporary historians, that this Basil, by whom Photinus was convicted, was a turbulent and truckling heretic himself—the oracle of the "*homoiousians*," or *Semiarians*, as they were now called. Now whatever *inward* sentiments they might have had of the proper *Deity* of the Son, the Semiarians openly denied the *Deity* of the Holy Ghost, and believed him to be merely a creature or quality. The bishop ought therefore to have made mention of this fact, that Basil of Ancyra, as much an Anti-trinitarian as Arius himself, had been placed in that See, by the prevalence of Anti-trinitarian, if not of Arian, interest, upon the violent and uncanonical thrusting out of Marcellus, its former bishop, whose scholar Photinus is said to have been [1]. It being presumable, that both master

[1] Marcellus was acknowledged orthodox by the Council of Nice, anno 325; but condemned as a Sabellian, by the Arians of Constantinople in 336. Having along with Athanasius fled to Rome, in 342, he was received and owned by Julius; was absolved and reponed, at Sardica in 347; but was recondemned by the heretics at Philippopolis; nay, began to be suspected, and was at last shunned, by his fellow-sufferer Athanasius. For this, (in his Defensio), Dr Bull endeavours to account, by attributing Athanasius's regard for him to the man's cunning and dissimulation, and to his zeal against the Arians. No great compliment

master and scholar were of one mind on the subject, which brought on both the same condemnation, without attempting to vindicate their characters or principles, I may be permitted to ask, What it could have been in the doctrine held by these two men, which rendered them so highly obnoxious to both *Catholics* and *Arians*, if it was not, that they carried the Deity of our Saviour to the highest pitch of *eternity*, *equality*, and *consubstantiality*, so provoking to the Arians: while, on the other hand, they attempted to account for that *eternity*, *equality*, and *consubstantiality*, in a style, and manner, different from what the catholics had now thought fit to adopt; nor only so, but to fix, as the standard, in all time coming, both of faith and language.

Thus did something a-kin to the doctrine of *eternal generation*, procure a footing in the church, from this period, to the conclusion of the fourth century; founded upon a wrong translation of *one single text* of Scripture, taken up, on that ground, by Athanasius—*by* him strenuously urged in all his writings—and *after* him, resorted to by three great champions of the catholic cause, *Basil* and the two

pliment to the sagacity of Athanasius, in permitting himself to be so long imposed upon by such a character; or to his probity, in countenancing any man, from such a motive. Unless from the pen of his professed antagonist, Eusebius of Cæsarea, we have no account of Marcellus's doctrines; and Eusebius, though a valuable historian, was, in his own time, and is to this day, suspected of swaying somewhat to the Arian side.

Gregories, in the disputations which they held with Œlius, and his disciple Eunomius, the two ablest defenders of Arianism, who have ever appeared, and two of the most sophistical quibblers of that, or perhaps any other age.

The fifth century, however, gave birth to a new discovery in heretical science. For then started up that arch enemy of grace, the British Pelagius; against whose pestilential opinions the two bright luminaries of the Latin church, Augustine and Jerome, commenced a vigorous attack. After Pelagius, appeared Nestorius, whose absurd fancy, about the "*two persons*," joined to the more troublesome errors of Eutyches about the "*one nature*," occasioned the assembling of two General Councils—one at Ephesus, anno 430, against Nestorius; and another at Chalcedon, anno 451, against Eutyches. Suffice it then to say, that Pelagianism, Nestorianism, and Eutychianism, afforded ample scope for the polemical talents of all the literati and disputants of that age.

The succeeding century was agitated by one of the most extraordinary measures, which human ingenuity ever devised—no other than condemning the memory of three departed prelates, Theodorus of Mopsuestia, Ibas of Edessa, and Theodoret of Cyprus. To this measure was given the name of "*the three chapters*;" and from it arose a fifth General Council, at Constantinople, anno 553;

553; in the course of which, Vigilius bishop of Rome acted such an unbecoming part, as produced an open schism in the Western church for many years.

Early in the seventh century, were sown the seeds of that fatal contention about *universal supremacy*, which, in the end, did effectually rend the *One*, *Catholic*, church. This supremacy was first claimed by the bishop of Constantinople, and manfully opposed by Gregory bishop of Rome; who, as he disclaimed it for himself, condemned it in any other bishop. Regardless, however, of his predecessor's bright example, Gregory's successor, Boniface, insisted for the gaudy title, and had it conferred upon him by the bloody usurper Phocas, who had inhumanly murdered Gregory's faithful friend, the worthy Emperor Mauritius. And now burst forth "the very overflowings of ungodliness," when the desolations of Mahometanism, like a cataract from the mountains, swept all before it; carrying havoc and destruction, both in matters spiritual, and matters temporal, over the whole face of the Eastern church. Notwithstanding which we find, to our great surprise, the woeful spirit of contention, and innovation, still prevailing. For, about the middle of the seventh century, was broached at Constantinople, upon the Eutychian plan, the *Monothelite* doctrine of *one will*, and *one operation*, in Christ. After having reached the Western church, where it infected *one* Pope, Honorius, and occasioned

sioned the death of another, Martin, this heresy was condemned, in a sixth General Council, and all its abettors (Pope Honorius himself not excepted), anathematized.

The eighth century commenced, with the *Western* part of the empire shaking off the jurisdiction of the Emperor, in the *East*. This schism was occasioned, as history informs us, by the Emperor Leo Isaurus prohibiting the worship of images; a practice which was, at the time, creeping into the rituals of the church, and which had been, from its first adoption, distinguished by the papal favour. Nay, the Roman pontiffs, out of resentment, nicknamed the Emperor Leo, *Iconomachus*, because he opposed the practice, which, through their influence, paved the way for the mighty disruption, which afterwards followed, in the person of the celebrated Charlemagne. This novelty of *image-worship* was condemned in a Council held at Constantinople, and consisting of 330 bishops, anno 754. It was received and established in another Council held at Nice, termed by the Romanists, the *Seventh General Council*, anno 787. And it was rejected, anno 794, by upwards of 300 bishops, convened for that purpose at Frankfort, in Germany, by Charlemagne, who, although raised by the Popes to the imperial throne, yet strenuously opposed their introduction of image-worship. This however, to their disgrace, they afterwards succeeded in establishing.

The

The whole of the ninth century was occupied with the dispute, about precedency, between the churches of Constantinople and Rome. This dispute, towards the conclusion of this century, led to a violent competition, for the patriarchate of Constantinople, between Ignatius and Photius. One Council, (anno 869), reckoned by the Romanists the eighth General Council, determined for Ignatius, and deposed Photius. Another, (anno 879), held, by the Greek church, to be the only true one, deposed Ignatius, and re-established Photius in the dignity of Patriarch. In this deposition, Pope John the VIIIth of that name, concurred; and, by receiving Photius into communion, thought to prevent the threatening breach. But his successors, in the Roman see, soon reverted to former schemes of ambitious violence; the issue of which was the completion of this long agitated rupture. Without entering into the merits of the contest, I shall merely state, that, as far as regards the patriarch Photius, to whom the Greeks continued to adhere, he appears to me, from the works which he penned, (particularly from his '*Nomocanon*,' and '*Bibliotheca*,') to have been a man endowed with as valuable a portion of universal literature, and knowledge, as any son of whom the Greek church ever had to boast.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

AS the centuries immediately subsequent to the ninth, have been well termed, by the Roman annalist Baronius, "the sæculum of iron and lead," I need not waste the reader's time, with a minute enquiry into what was then the state of the christian church, and of the prevailing sentiments on the subject of the Deity of Christ. And I have this apology to make for the digression from this subject, which forms the contents of the preceding letter, that I was led into it, from a wish to account, in some measure, for the little regard shewn, after the 4th century, to the great dispute then agitated—whether "*generation*," strictly so called, should be applied *actively*, or *passively*, to Deity. In the 12th century, it is true, that Abelard, and, much about the same period, two Cistertian abbots, named Joachim and Laudo, proposed to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity, in a different way. But these attempts, (and, it may be, many others are recorded) were soon quashed by the stroke of a papal anathema, now, as it were, become omnipotent. For 'eternal generation,' in the modern acceptation of the terms, was the standard language of the Roman

Roman church, so early as the end of the eighth century. This appears in the confutation of what was then called, the '*Adoptionarian*' heresy of two Spanish bishops, Felix and Elipandus, by the learned Alcuin, (the Latin luminary of that age), and his associates. There we frequently meet the terms "*sempiternus, de sempiterno patre genitus*—the eternal "Son of the eternal Father;" the very language this of modern theology.

Yet in the management of the controversy, to which the 'adoptionarian heresy' gave birth, and of which it is difficult for us to ascertain either the meaning or the design, it is visible to what straits the catholic disputants are reduced by their pertinacious adherence to this language. Thus, when other arguments begin to fail him, Alcuin himself resorts to "Romana auctoritas," *the authority of the Roman church*, "which," according to him, "ought to be "followed by all catholics and true believers." Strange language this from one, who, in the article of image-worship, had not only dissented from the Roman church, but even opposed this church, with Pope Adrian at its head. Alcuin's superior abilities silenced the *doctrinal* fancy of the *adoptionarians*, which after all could have done little harm. But the *practical* and more absurd fancy of *image-worship* withstood the abilities of an Alcuin; and was finally sanctioned by the very 'Romana auctoritas,' which he urged in the other case as obligatory "on "all catholics and true believers." What wonder

is it, therefore, if the 'authority of Rome,' which could command the adoption of '*image-worship*,' with the belief of '*human infallibility*,' '*transubstantiation*,' and the like, should equally command the belief of '*eternal generation*,'—an abstruse and speculative point of faith, which, though human reason be not able to apprehend it, may still, it seems, depend for support, on a little scripture, and a little primitive language wrested to that purpose.

Even when, towards the close of the fourteenth century, there appeared, in England, a dawn of reformation by *Wickliff*, and in Bohemia, some years after, by *Huss*, no notice is taken of the modes of doctrinal expression, then in use. These men's attention was principally, if not solely, directed to more palpable, and visible instances of what they deemed corruption. Whatever their inclinations might have been, they had no time to discuss the contendible minutiæ of existing systems. Nay, Luther himself, and his valuable assistant Melancthon, the great instruments, under God, of effecting the long attempted reformation, seem not only to have adopted the current language, on this subject, but to have afforded the advocates for the doctrine of 'eternal generation' authority for condemning any other mode of illustrating the Deity of Christ. With their rival reformer, Calvin, this is not the case. By giving our Saviour the title "Αυτοθεος—*God of himself*," Calvin renders the doctrine of *eternal generation* worse than nugatory. For this he

is

is bitterly attacked by the Jesuits—while the very thought seems *horrible* to the learned Dr Bull, who exclaims, " Horresco hæc referens !"

When Arminius set himself to oppose the rigid tenets of the Calvinistic school, which were afterwards established in the Synod of Dort, he also impugned the title which Calvin bestowed on Jesus Christ; and, from his chair, as divinity-professor at Leyden, boldly decided, that making Christ Αυτοθεος, was a novel opinion, unknown to the ancient Greek and Latin churches. These, according to him, always affirmed, that the divinity of the Son was derived from the Father by an eternal generation; though, at the same time, he acknowledges that, " as Αυτοθεος *had been used by Epiphanius, and by* " *other orthodox divines, both ancient and modern, it* " *was not absolutely to be rejected if rightly understood.*"

The first protestant Confession of Faith submitted to the Scottish church has nothing in it, which can be said even to allude to generation of any sort, eternal or otherwise. The first Article, in describing Almighty God, declares him to be—" omnipo- " tent, invisible, of one substance, and yet distinct " into three persons, the Father, the Son, and the " Holy Ghost, by whom all things were created," &c. While the sixth Article, entitled—" Of the " Incarnation of Jesus Christ," does equally abstain from the use of the term generation; and speaks only of our Lord, as " the just seed of David, the

"angel of the great Councell of God, the very Mes-
"sias promised, whom we acknowledge and con-
"fess Emanuel, very God and very man, two
"perfect natures, united, and joined in one person.
"By which our confession, we condemn the dam-
"nable and pestilent heresies of Arius, Marcion,
"Eutyches, Nestorius, and such others, as either
"deny the eternity of his Godhead, or the ve-
"rity of his human nature, or confound them, or
"yet divide them."

This confession, in XXV articles, was drawn up, under the immediate eye of John Knox, who, being Calvin's disciple, in all probability adopted his *Autothean* plan. Having been presented to the convention of estates, anno 1560, it was ratified by them, and continued to be the only public standard of faith to all the protestants of Scotland, whether episcopalian or presbyterian, until the revolution in 1688.

In the article of our Saviour's Deity, the Church of England seems rather to incline towards the creed of Arminius—but with that modesty and reserve which characterise the standard faith of that church. "The Son, which is the word of the Father, *begot-*
"*ten from everlasting of the Father*, the very and e-
"ternal God, of one substance with the Father,
"took[1]," &c. The words, "begotten from ever-
"lasting of the Father," it will not be denied, are exactly

[1] See Thirty-nine Articles of Religion—Art. 2.

exactly conformable with the words in the Nicene Creed, "begotten of his Father, before all worlds," language, as Arminius said of Αυτοθεος, "not to be "rejected, if rightly understood."

The Westminster Assembly, having been ordered, anno 1643, to examine the English Articles, and to render them conformable with their own tenets, did however, in this instance, abandon the Genevan oracle, and adopt the belief of Arminius—that the "Son is *eternally* begotten of the Father[1]." And again, "it is proper to the Son to be begotten of "the Father from *all eternity*[2]." I do not say, that those divines of the English church, who have so strenuously espoused this doctrine, took "the West-"minster Confession of Faith" for their warrant. But I do maintain that they are, in the point of *eternal generation*, more warranted by *that confession*, than they are by the thirty-nine articles of their own church; which neither require nor countenance their positive explication of it. And I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise, that, in so valuable work as Dr Pearson's Exposition of the Apostle's Creed, after having confirmed by scriptural authorities, Christ's fourfold[3] right to the title—'*Son of God*,' the learned author should have added—"beside these four, *we must find* yet a more "pe-

[1] See Confess. ch. 2. [2] See Larger Catech. q. 10.

[3] 1st. By generation, as begotten of God. 2d. By commission, as sent by him. 3. By resurrection, as the first-born. 4. By actual possession, as heir of all. See Exposition of the words, "His only Son."

"peculiar ground of our Saviour's filiation, totally "distinct from any which belongs unto the rest of "the sons of God—that he may be clearly and fully acknowledged the only begotten Son." As if any of the four particular sources of right, which he justly ascribes to our Saviour, had ever belonged to, or had ever been claimed by any other being, to have rendered the task, which the expositor here binds himself to discharge ("*we must find*") necessary. Nor are the terms, in which Dr Pearson announces his mode of discharging this necessary task, less calculated to excite our surprise, than the task itself. "First, I *will clearly prove, out of the* "*holy Scriptures*, that Jesus Christ, &c. Secondly, "*I will demonstrate from the same Scriptures*, &c. "Thirdly, *we will shew* that the divine essence, "which he had, he received, as communicated to "him by the Father. Fourthly, *we will declare* "this communication of the divine nature to be a "proper generation[1]." In his two first positions, our author talks of "*clearly proving*," and "*demon-* "*strating*" FROM SCRIPTURE—in the two latter, he simply undertakes to "*shew*" and "*declare*," and *that*, without mentioning a word of Scripture.—What a falling off is here! But such must always be the case, when, in religious investigation, we seek to *find* what Scripture has not to bestow. True, the learned Doctor in "*shewing*" and "*declaring*" what, in the above instances, he engages to *shew* and

[1] See Expos. edit. 3. p. 107.

and *declare*, has brought forward some assumed, but questionable deductions from reason, and a copious catalogue of later fathers; but he has brought forward not one appropriate text of Scripture. A defect this, which must of necessity startle every protestant reader; who, whatever respect he may feel for antiquity, never can place it on a level with the holy Scriptures. And this has been, and, with me, is still, just matter of complaint, that, not merely in *Scripture* instances, but in treating of the works of *uninspired* writers, men should shew themselves to be "wise above what is written." Yet of this we have a notable proof, and that too, on the very subject in hand, from the pen of Mr Reeves, the well known translator of the ancient christian Apologists.—For this gentleman, in translating a long and intricate passage in the Apology of Tertullian, says, in one place, "thus it is in *the eternal ge-* "*neration* of the Logos;" and a little after—"and "so the Son is *subordinate* to the Father[1];" when it is visible to every school-boy, that, in the text of Tertullian, there is nothing which, *at the greatest distance*, points to either one or other of these dicta. If such conduct is warrantable, then it follows, that *any* thing may be found in *any* writer. Yet are the "Apologies" of Mr Reeves put into the hands of the Theological Student, as an excellent preparatory work. That they ought to be perused with caution, I hope it is not *now* too much for me to say.

[1] See Reeves' Tertul. Apol. ch. 21.

say. But I shall have occasion to take some further notice of Mr Reeves, before I have done with the present discussion.

LETTER IX.

NOTWITHSTANDING what you find advanced in the foregoing Letters—notwithstanding the *silence* which pervades the whole code of Scripture, on the subject of the '*eternal generation*' of Christ—and notwithstanding the variety of sentiment to which, both before and after its obtaining the sanction of long use, or of express decision, the doctrine has given birth, I, for one, should not have scrupled to let it pass, as *one* way, though in my opinion not the *best way*, of endeavouring to explain what appears to me inexplicable—viz. the mode of a TRINE SUBSISTENCE IN ONE ESSENCE—that is, of a *Trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead.* But the consequences of such acquiescence are greatly to be dreaded; and it is the consideration of these consequences, and that alone, which has stimulated me to occupy so much time in exposing

posing, to your view, the unsolid ground on which, not merely the doctrine itself, but every argument urged in favour of it, doth originally rest.

I am not to be told, that a doctrine is not *justly* chargeable with any bad consequence ascribed to it by its *cavilling opponent*, unless the *friends* and *abettors* of the doctrine do not only see, but avow such *consequence*. When however the bad consequence is not only seen, but is avowed—nay more, when the doctrine is the more strenuously urged and defended, for the sake of establishing this very consequence, what remains, but that the person who feels himself warranted in gainsaying the consequence, should minutely examine the doctrine from which it *avowedly* flows, and if cause and effect cannot be separated, to reject both?

With the doctrine of 'eternal generation,' this, I am sorry to say, is *decidedly* the case. 'SUBORDINATION,' with its inseparable associate 'INFERIORITY,' is undeniably consequent on it. And these are qualities, which, I can never persuade myself, to be consistent with *true and proper* Deity; nor, in in any manner of way, applicable to it. That the Saviour of mankind must be, and that he is, *truly and properly God*, I was early, and upon conviction never to be shaken, taught to believe. From this belief, by God's grace, I never have departed, and never will depart; insomuch, that when I entered into the service of the church, about fifty-five years

ago, and found the doctrine of 'eternal generation' to be the current doctrine, *held*, (by my superiors in years and talents) to be "worthy of all accep-" tation," I was overwhelmed with doubt and perplexity. Whether I was right or not, in drawing, what others deemed an *inadmissible* consequence, from the doctrine, was, for some time, with me a matter of uncertainty; until that (now many years ago) I met with Dr Bull's celebrated "Defensio "Fidei Nicenæ," which dissolved the spell. For, to my no small astonishment, and I will add *mortification*, to find my own suspicions verified, I beheld the last section of that elaborate performance, entitled, "DE SUBORDINATIONE FILII—*Of the Subor-*" *dination of the Son.*"

Here the very title excited alarm. His three first sections, under appropriate *Greek* designations, gave me the wished for satisfaction—προυπαρξις, ὁμοουσιος, and συναιδιος—the *præexistence*, the *consubstantiality*, and *con-eternity* of Jesus Christ. For I had concluded, and I hope justly concluded, that, from the Greek being the original language of christianity, these three Greek terms expressed true and primitive doctrine. Besides I had, in the course of my theological studies, hit on a rule for detecting spurious doctrine, which seldom or ever has misled me. The rule is this—'where, in points of christi-'an doctrine and discipline, the Romanists and we 'agree, those points are all of them designated by 'an appropriate name of *Greek derivation*; such as

APOSTLE,

'APOSTLE, CATHOLIC, CANON, ANATHEMA, ECCLESI-
'ASTIC, EPISCOPACY, PRESBYTER, DEACON, BAPTISM,
'EUCHARIST, and such like: while such points as
'are matter of difference between the Romanists
'and us, are all of *Latin derivation*, and therefore
'novel: such are—INDULGENCES, PURGATORY, SU-
'PREMACY, INFALLIBILITY, SACRAMENTS, EXTREME
'UNCTION, MERITS, TRANSUBSTANTIATION,' &c. It is indeed surprising, that a man so eminent as Dr Bull confessedly was for his skill in the learned languages, could not have found, or could not have formed a proper Greek word, by which to express the matter of which the concluding section of his work was meant to treat; when those preceding had all been thus appropriately characterized. He had constructed the first thesis of his concluding section thus: "That the generality of the catholic "doctors, both before, and after the Council of "Nice, have all, with one consent, taught, that the "divine nature and perfections do agree to the "Father and the Son, not collaterally, or co-ordi-"nately, but SUBORDINATELY." Yet if such had been the unanimous doctrine of this body collective of *Grecian* sages, it is not too much for us to presume, that, in their writings, some particular term must have existed, expressive of the *subordination*, which, "with one consent," these doctors "taught." Why then did not our Doctor produce the word which the generality of the catholic Doctors used, to have made his performance *uniform*? Or, if he could not discover the precise

for *subordination*, as used by them, why did he not form such a term of the materials, which they at least could not fail to furnish? The Latin verb '*ordino*,' is acknowledged by Greek lexicographers, to be the leading sense of 'τασσω;' and '*subordino*' of 'υποτασσω;" the noun derivative from which is 'υποταξις, i. e. "SUBORDINATIO." Moreover, 'υποταξις would have been a scriptural title to his section, which the three other titles are not; and for this reason they have been much exposed to heretical clamour.

The sacred writers do frequently use this Greek verb 'υποτασσω. "Let every soul," enjoins St Paul, "*be subject*—'υποτασσεσθω—to the higher powers [1]." And again, "Wives—'υποτασσεσθε—*submit* yourselves, &c [2]." Nay, should these, and such like examples be thought unappropriate to the present case, by reason of the too extended sense here given to the term, there are two texts of Scripture directly in point of Dr Bull's "*Subordinatio Filii*"—"*He* went "down with them," says St Luke, "and—'υποτασσο-"μενος—*was subject* unto them [3]." While St Paul is still more precise—"then shall the *Son* also him-"self—'υποταγησεται—be subject unto him that put "all things under him [4]." But alas! this is a text which bears heavy indeed upon a *present* 'subordi-'nation' of the Son, which is the sense that Dr Bull

[1] Romans xiii. 1. [2] Ephes. v. 22.
[3] St Luke ii. 51. [4] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

Bull contends for. It speaks of a change, a mighty change, in the present system of divine œconomy: and it even makes *this* one distinguishing sign or effect of this mighty change, that the *Son* shall "THEN" become '*subordinate*:' whereas if he be 'subordinate' already, and has been *subordinate from all eternity*, where is the propriety, or even sense, in the apostle's postponing such subordination to a future period? I am under no obligation to attempt an explication of what St Paul had authority to reveal to the christians at Corinth. It is unquestionably a passage 'hard to be understood.' It is however, for my purpose, enough to observe, that as a man of Dr Bull's biblical research could not but know, that such a Greek term as ὑποτασσω existed; yet being equally acquainted with the context of the different passages in Scripture, where the term occurs, and fearing to build, upon these passages, his favourite hypothesis, he satisfied himself with the Latin term, '*subordino*,' instead of it, as one which subjected him to neither danger nor alarm.

Yet, all the while, there is, in Scripture, a 'subordination' recommended, which I should have no scruple to admit, mutatis mutandis, in Deity, where Dr Bull labours hard to place it—"submitting yourselves ὑποτασσομενοι—being *subordi-*"*nate* one to another[1]." And again, "all of you "be *subordinate*—ὑποτασσομενοι—to one another[2]."

In

[1] Ephes. v. 21. [2] 1 St Peter v. 5.

In both places something is implied, as a duty in christian society, which may be conceived, but which cannot well be expressed. It is *that*, however, which, with becoming reverential modification, constitutes the only '*subordination*' which, in my humble opinion, ever can, with propriety, be ascribed to any of the *Three* who exist in the unity of Jehovah. In this opinion Dr Bull is none of those who are likely to coincide. His second Thesis is, on the contrary, thus expressed: "The "catholic writers, both before and after the Coun- "cil of Nice, have unanimously *declared*—'Deum "'patrem, quoad divinitatem, majorem filio esse.' "—God the Father to be *greater*, even according "TO HIS DIVINITY, than the Son." Now this is that which forms the point of partition between the espousers of Dr Bull's creed, and those who, like myself, cannot even for one moment suppose, much less *declare*, the terms "*greater or less*," applicable to Deity. If Scripture be competent to decide on a subject, which ought to depend on scriptural authority, and none other—*Deity* is unsusceptible of degrees. "Divinitas gradum non habet, utpote "unica," asserts Tertullian, in strict conformity with what is written for our learning in the word of God himself.

Aware of this, Dr Bull has qualified the "greaterness," which, according to him, the "catholic writers "both before and after the Council of Nice, have "unanimously ascribed to the Father, by telling us, "that

"that it is not by nature, but only by Fatherhood." To me this seems to be a metaphysical distinction, not altogether comprehensible; a distinction which, if minutely examined, might be found liable to more difficulties than your edification requires me to mention. And therefore, at the risk of exposing myself to the censure of Dr Bull and his followers, for thus daring to question the truth and validity of his strange Theses, "De Subordinatione Filii," I must reject a *Paternity* and *Filiation*, which appear to me burdened with such incumbrances; and I am content to rest my belief on the clear evidence of Scripture, which points out to me a *subordination* and *inferiority* of a different sort—not only admissible, but, in the wonderful œconomy of man's salvation, highly satisfactory and highly beneficial.

Of his structure Dr Bull has laid the foundation, as we have seen, on the following ground: "The "*catholic* writers, both before and after the Coun"cil of Nice, have unanimously declared, that God "the Father, even as to his divinity, is greater than "the Son." How he has made this position good, is open to every reader. But granting, for a moment, that the position has been fully established by the Doctor; yet, in a point of such high importance to christians as the nature of that God in whom they believe, what is the *declaration* of all the 'writers,' catholic or anticatholic, in the world, if not supported by the *declaration* of the Holy Ghost himself, "who spake by the *prophets*;" and who, as

the

the Spirit of truth, guided the *apostles* into *all* truth? In matters of ecclesiastical order and discipline, I am ready to pay "the catholic writers, both before and "after the Council of Nice," all due respect and attention. In these instances, the 'quod semper, 'quod ubique, quod ab omnibus—that which has 'been always, everywhere, by all received,' is the rule which I would have every christian implicitly to adopt. In that which revelation only can teach, I think myself warranted in demanding that revelation only be appealed to. I therefore would have every christian, more especially every candidate for the holy ministry, to mark "quod dicit Dominus," not "ut loquitur Athanasius."

It is true, there are many texts in Scripture, which, by inference and deduction, do not merely in appearance, but in reality denote an inferiority in the Son. But Bishop Pearson, in his Exposition of the Apostles' Creed, has given us a key that will open up their true and proper interpretation. Indeed, in all the extensive code of divine revelation, there is only a single text, which directly, and in terminis, points to the "greaterness," for which Dr Bull has shewn himself so keen an advocate. It is the text, of which the Arian tribes have, in every age, so much availed themselves— "*My Father is greater than I*[z]." Yet Dr Bull has not had the hardihood to say, that, respect-

[z] 1 St John xix. 28.

respecting the application of this text "all the ca-"tholic writers" are *unanimous*. Some of them have applied it to the *human nature* in Christ, some of them to *the divine nature*, and others to *both the divine and human natures*. In this case nothing, so decisive as Dr Bull would have it, can be made of our Saviour's language. The assigning it to the *humanity* would spoil all the force of the Doctor's "*major quoad divinitatem*." Yet Athanasius himself, if Beza has done him justice, seems to give the weight of his authority in favour of this application. "Scribitur, '*Pater major esse Filio*,' at neque mole, "nec tempore, nec natura, sed quatenus pater est "filii, qui hominem assumpsit: propter quam as-"sumptionem—inferior factus fuit angelis—et etiam "subjectus fuit Mariæ et Josepho[1]." And a little after he affirms—"Ipse, quem in confesso est Dei-"tate Patri æqualem esse, '*majorem dicit Patrem*,' "eo quod servi formam assumpsit, et Patrem hono-"rat—He, who is acknowledged to be in Deity "equal to the Father, *calls the Father greater*, be-"cause he took upon himself the form of a servant, "and honours the Father."

Nor is this all—since ecclesiastical history bears, that, in a council of thirty-two bishops, holden at *Aquileia*, anno 379, where *Ambrose*, bishop of *Milan*, was the chief speaker, and where *Palladius*, an Arian bishop, urged this text, with the addition u-

 sually

[1] See Dialogues already quoted, Dial. 2.

sually made to it by Origen, "My Father, *who sent* "*me*, is greater than I," the whole members cried out "*anathema*" against all such as added to, or took from the Scriptures; and unanimously agreed, that it is by reason of the assumed *humanity*, that the Father is greater than the Son, but that in respect of the *Divinity*, they are both equal.

But granting the application, for which Dr Bull claims a *majority* of the catholic writers, both before and after the Council of Nice, to be the true application of our Saviour's language, it is possible, in my opinion, to give the text even this application, without the harsh inferences drawn from it by Dr Bull. And, I think, our Saviour himself has afforded the requisite authority—"Whether," asks he, "is *greater*, he that sitteth at meat, or he that "serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am "among you, as he that serveth [1]." What is this, if not proclaiming the apostles *greater* than their blessed Master? Yet how could this be? It could not be, that they were *greater* in dignity: for he tells them, in another place, "Ye call me *Master* "and *Lord*, and ye say well, *for so I am*." And again, "the *servant* is *not greater* than *his Lord* [2]." But it was *from* and *by*, and *because* of his own voluntary condescension, viz. that "συγκαταβασις," of which, Dr Bull owns, that the Greek fathers speak so much, and upon which they build so much.

As

[1] *St Luke* xxii. 27. [2] St John xiii. 13, and 16.

As man, Christ was certainly equal, if not superior to the apostles; yet, *by office*, did Christ condescend to lower himself, and to call even his apostles *greater* than he. *As God*, Christ, in like manner, was equal to the Father; yet, *by office*, did Christ also here condescend to lower himself, and to call the Father *greater* than he. While both these acts of condescension are concisely "written for our learning" in the following striking passage of holy writ—"Being in the form of God—ουκ αρπαγ-"μον ηγησατο—*he thought it not robbery* to be *equal* "with God, but—εκενωσεν εαυτον—*he emptied himself*" (by becoming man) "and being found *in fashion*, "(σχηματι, *by or according to a* SCHEME, viz. the "*scheme of redemption*) εταπεινωσεν εαυτον—he humbled "himself[a]," &c. Thus it was, by his *voluntary* "κενωσις," or *emptying himself*, that it became our blessed Lord to say, "My Father is *greater* than I." It was by his voluntary "ταπεινωσις," or *humbling* himself, that it became him also, as we have seen, to proclaim his apostles to be *greater* than he.

In short, if the explication here given of this solitary text of Scripture be entitled to respect; and the great Athanasius would seem (as the reader has already been apprized) to favour it, it is evident, that Dr Bull's position, "*major quoad divini-*"*tatem*," is not so incontrovertible, as he, or the *ca-*

 tholic

[a] Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

tholic writers, of whom he boasts, would make us believe.

But to return from this digression, if it deserves the name of digression, to the doctrine of the *subordination* of the Son of God, so strenuously espoused by Dr Bull and his followers, we find him giving an illustration of it in the following words: "That "the Son hath indeed the same *divine nature*, in "common with the Father, but hath it *communi-* "*cated* from the Father; so that the Father alone "hath that divine nature *from himself*, and from "none other; but the Son has it *from the Father*, "and consequently the Father is the fountain, *ori-* "*ginal*, and *principle* of the Divinity that is in the "Son."

It may not be, that the writer, whom I am about to quote, had this illustration of Dr Bull's in view; yet his language is so pertinent, that I choose to adopt it, that the reader may see how differently another bishop, and he equally the advocate of '*eternal generation*' with Bishop Bull, thought on this subject. Dr Brown, bishop of Cork and Ross, in Ireland, giving a long catalogue of what he calls "absurd and inconsistent notions, which a *plain ra-* "*tional* man would be ashamed of," mentions the two following as belonging to the number: "That "a person should be, by nature, *truly God*, and yet "not the *true God*, and that he should not have "one attribute, *originally* and properly *his own*, to "render him even *truly God*. 2. That the Father "*communicated* to the Son *true divinity*, which, of

"all

" all things, seems to the mind of man utterly *in-*
" *communicable*[1]." Nay, in allusion to these " ab-
" surd and inconsistent notions," this author is bold enough to say, " These and such like positions, con-
" tained in some of our modern systems of religion,
" are but a light taste of the poison, still latent, in
" the late famous Fifty-five Propositions, which are
" a body of clandestine Arianism; and the most
" artful disguise, and subtle refinement of this he-
" resy, that has ever appeared[2]."

The propositions here alluded to are the fabrication of one, whom, although he be the oracle of too many young divines, I will be bold to call an interested truckler between *Arianism* and a *Rectory*, viz. the philosophical and eloquent Dr Samuel Clarke. It grieves me to say, that two of these propositions are drawn up nearly in the words of Dr Bull. Prop. 34. " The Son is evidently *subor-*
" *dinate* to the Father, in that he *derives* his being
" and attributes *from* the Father; the Father no-
" thing *from him.*" Prop. 39. " In the monarchy
" of the universe, there is but one authority, *origi-*
" *nal* in the Father, *derivative* in the Son; the
" power of the Son being neither opposite, nor co-
" ordinate to that of the Father." Now this is the language of Dr Bull's 3d Thesis—" The *subordina-*
" *tion doctrine* is necessary to be known and believ-
" ed,

[1] See Brown's " Procedure of the Human Understanding," published in 1729.—p. 297.

[2] p. 301.

"ed, that by this means the *Godhead* of the Son "might be so asserted, as the *unity* of God ne- "vertheless, and the divine *monarchy* might still be "preserved inviolate." Is there here a shade of difference from the doctrine; and is there any other but a shade of difference from the language of Dr Clarke, above quoted? Nay more, Dr Bull makes *that* "necessary to be *known* and *believed*," which we have seen another protestant Bishop, Dr Brown, brands with the name of "*clandestine Ari-* "*anism*;" and he too, a writer of no mean repute; and, as I have already informed you, an equal asserter of the doctrine of '*eternal generation*,' with Dr Bull.

Dr Brown however is so candid as to own, that these terms, "*God of himself, cause, principle, root,* "*fountain, original, supremacy, subordinate, co-ordi-* "*nate, subsistence, incommunicable*, and such like, "are *not* the language of revelation, when used to "explain the unity of the divine nature, but so "many notional affected terms, which some great "and learned men have invented, to express their "*peculiar* sentiments, and their several ways of "thinking of that *unity*[1]." Nay, it is worthy of particular notice, that Mr Reeves, whose zeal in the cause of 'eternal generation,' and of the 'sub- 'ordination of the Son,[2]' had emboldened him to

[1] See "Procedure," &c. p. 294.

[2] See Conclusion of Letter VIII.

to represent the christian Father Tertullian, as authorizing the belief of these doctrines, speaks to the very same purpose with Dr Brown. "Whoever," says Mr Reeves, "believes a Trinity of divine per-"sons, in the unity of the Godhead, or one es-"sence, believes sufficient, without more explicit "notions of the modes of eternal generation and "procession, which are mysteries beyond the depth "of any created intellect: and I must needs say, "that it had been much better, if some great men "had only proved the matter of fact, that such an "article is expressed in Scripture, and attested by "all the first catholic writers, and so left it as a "doctrine incomprehensible [1]."

Dr Bull however shews himself to be more self-consistent; for he roundly affirms, that his explanatory theses "*De subordinatione Filii*," are of *necessary belief;* whereby he strives to fix, as far as he is able, the doctrine of "the subordination of the Son," with all its consequences, as a part of the creed of every orthodox christian. The consequence has been, that this part of the learned Doctor's "Defensio," &c. has excited more critical discussion than any of his other works, the "Harmo-"nia Apostolica" not excepted, which, pace tanti viri, is vulnerable in many of its parts. On this account his biographer and panegyrist, the worthy and well-known Robert Nelson, is constrained to ac-

[1] See Preface to Reeves' translation, &c. p. 52.

acknowledge, that "there are various opinions "concerning his (Dr Bull's) performance of this "last part, and different uses have been made of "it, by different parties, which," says he, "*is not* "*much to be wondered at*[1]." He owns too, that *Whiston* and *Clarke* have applied the Doctor's performance, in support of their degrading tenets; and is satisfied with the common-place argument, that these and such like have applied the holy Scriptures themselves to the same purpose. But the Scriptures, it should be remembered, constitute the standard, to which every man calling himself a christian is bound to have recourse; and I hope so good a man as Mr Nelson did not mean to place the Scriptures, and Dr Bull's writings, in the same scale. The Scriptures, in all matters of faith, are peremptory, and authoritative decisions—and as such are not to be charged with any bad use that may be made of them, or any wrong sense that may be put upon them. But no human writings possess this privilege, or can claim this exemption; therefore none of these ought ever to be conceived in such unguarded language, as may have the effect of betraying the cause of truth into the hands of gainsayers. Such, however, in every respect, is "this "last part of Dr Bull's performance." Messrs Whiston and Clarke stand justly charged with perverting the Scriptures to make *Christ a creature*. Dr Bull is however equally chargeable; since he has laid

[1] See Life of Bull, &c. p. 322.

laid down a thesis, (to prove which only the semblance of authority is adduced), the subject of which consists in this—that the *Son* is *less* than the *Father*; in other words, that *Christ* is *less* than *God*; therefore, in fact, *a creature*, be his pitch of exaltation, or our conceptions of it, what they may. This conclusion from the premises of Dr Bull is too obvious to have escaped logicians, such as Messrs Whiston and Clarke have proved themselves to be; and, on their plan, they were well entitled to use it as they have done: while the orthodox were and are entitled to complain, that Dr Bull should have afforded such countenance to heretics, in crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh. This, Mr Nelson informs us, was the case, and he particularizes Dr John Edwards of Cambridge, as one who, in animadverting on Dr Clarke's Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, lamented "that Dr Bull had hurt the "doctrine of the Trinity, by urging the *inferiority* "of the *Son* to the *Father*, in respect of his *divinity*."

But besides Dr Edwards, we find another learned combatant of Dr Clarke, viz. Dr Bennet of Colchester, positively asserting, "that the Scriptures "no where mention any *derivation* or *subordination* "in the Trinity[2]." And we find him judiciously applying any texts which seem to favour this hypothesis,

M

[1] Life of Dr Bull, &c. p. 333.

[2] See Examination of Dr Clarke's 55 Propositions, published 1717.

pothesis, to the præexisting soul of the Logos, or to his incarnation—which application he accompanies with this important question, to which no explicit answer has yet been given—" Do we ever find a " distinction, made in Scripture, between two Gods, " the one *supreme*, the other *subordinate*—the one " *self-existent*, the other *derived*!?"

I have extended this letter to an unusual length, not only for the purpose of pointing out to the reader, the few instances, which have occurred to me, of the *diversity of sentiment*, not to call it *self-contradiction*, prevalent among the espousers of the doctrine of 'eternal generation,' but for the purpose of shewing that the name and authority of Bishop Bull, in conjunction with the name and authority of Bishop Pearson, have not determined the dispute, nor silenced the opponents on either side. The result of which is this, that, for my own part, instead of being convinced by the arguments adduced by either party, I become the more rooted and grounded in this persuasion, viz. that the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son of God is not the proper mode, by which the faith of the orthodox christian can be confirmed, or by which the errors of the heretic can be confuted, as far as regards this fundamental article of our Creed—*the doctrine* of a CO-EQUAL, CO-ESSENTIAL, and CO-ETERNAL TRINITY.

LET-

LETTER X.

HAVING proceeded thus far in discussion of the doctrine of '*eternal generation*,' it seems high time for us to enquire, how the very *term*, which (although I acknowledge the adoption of it into theological language from the period of the 4th century) I still do affirm, has no warrant in Scripture, came to be first introduced, and thus, either by natural or imposed consequence, to have given birth to those woeful divisions which, on the subject of our Saviour's Deity, have rent the christian church to this very day.

Without farther preamble, there appear, in my opinion, to be *three causes*, to which the introduction of the term 'eternal generation' may be more or less assigned.

I. One great cause, and, it may be, the parent of the two other causes, I believe to be '*the Platonic philosophy*.' I know it to have been a contendible point, whether, at first, the Platonic philosophy had not some influence on christianity itself. The anti-trinitarians all maintain the affirmative; and hesitate

not to say, that Justin Martyr, who confessed himself to have been a Platonist, was the first who taught the doctrine of what is termed a "TRINITY." Nay, they go so far as even to allege, that the evangelist St John borrowed his *Logos* from the philosopher Plato. An allegation this, in the face of all probability. For it is hardly to be imagined, much less believed, that a poor fisherman of Judea should have been, either by education, or by inspiration, made acquainted with the philosophical refinements of Plato, or his followers. With much more apparent strength of argument, it has therefore been maintained, that Plato himself stole his '*Logos*' from the Hebrew Scriptures, where we frequently find it used as the appellation of a subsisting person. One thing is certain, that in this sense the Chaldean paraphrasts do explain the דבר, or *Logos* of the Old Testament, as Rittangelius, in his translation of the Old Jewish work, 'Jetzirah,' clearly proves. It is not material to this hypothesis, that we are ignorant of the way in which Plato should have found access to the Hebrew Scriptures. He might have seen a Greek translation of them prior to the septuagint æra, as Ludovicus Vives, and some others conceive: or having travelled into Phœnicia and Egypt, in search of knowledge, and having resided in the latter country, where there was, even in his time, a great concourse of Jews, Plato might have derived information from such as understood the Hebrew writings, and thus have picked up what seemed to him to suit his purpose. But be this as it may,

may, it is a point in which all the modern biographers of this celebrated philosopher concur, and which his own frequent allusions to the "Συριοι μυθοι" —*Syrian mysteries*, have proved, that Plato was acquainted with the Jewish records, and that he made great use of them.

This being premised, it is well known that a fundamental part of the theological system of Plato is the application, in some respect or another, of '*generation*' to Deity. Nor can it be denied, but that a man of his talent and discernment might have found, in the Hebrew scriptures, what, in his estimation, might amount to authority sufficient for this application.

The first revelation with which we are blessed, after the fall, (for what happened before that woeful event is lost to us), is contained in the divine promise, "that the *seed of the woman* should bruise "the serpent's head[1]." These words undeniably have an aspect to '*generation*' without the intervention of man. Yet how obscure will this aspect appear, when the joyful declaration of the mother of all flesh, on the birth of her first-born Son, is taken literally in the construction of the Hebrew language, without the gloss which our translators have given it—"And *Adam knew* his wife Eve, and "she conceived, and bare Cain, and said קניתי איש את יהוה

[1] Gen. iii. 15.

"יהוה", I have gotten *a man* the *very Jehovah!*" The promise however given to the woman, containing, as it does, the source of all our faith, and of all our hopes, is, after the flood, renewed to the patriarch Abraham, and his descendants, who are expressly informed, "that in a *seed* of theirs *all* nations should be blessed[2];" towards the fulfilment of which promise, the faithful of those days would reasonably conclude, that some divine and supernatural act was necessary.

Accordingly, upon the first deviation of man from revealed truth, when recourse was had to the most natural, and, in fact, most plausible of all systems of idolatrous worship, viz. the worshipping the material host of heaven; and when, in process of time, even this species of idolatry had been swallowed up in the abyss of later, and consequently grosser corruptions, we find "*the seed*" described, in the divine promise, laid hold of by the heathen world; and, with all the impure mixtures of a polluted imagination, grafted into their systems of theology; in all of which, the term "generation of "Deity" makes a very prominent figure. This is visible from the Orphaic verses, whether genuine or not, from *Homer*, the very *Moses*, as I may term him, of heathen antiquity, from *Hesiod's* Theogony, and indeed from the whole theological systems of the *civilized* idolaters of Greece and Rome.

In

[1] *See Gen. iv. 1.* in the original. [2] Gen. xxii. 18.

In the Grecian school, however, and in the far famed seat of Grecian literature, the city of Athens, was the renowned Plato born and bred. But dissatisfied with the multiplicity of "*generated*" deities who were introduced to his acquaintance, Plato, it would seem, did boldly undertake to abridge the number, and to bring the current creed to what he conceived a more philosophical standard. With this design, it was, that he sought in foreign countries what he could not find at home, —until having collected a store of *Hebrew* and of *heathen* science, and having artfully compounded these, he wrought up a new and more sublime system of theology, founded upon a Τριας or *Trinity*, (although he no where uses the vocable), and which, being no invention of his own, he well knew had been the basis of all the theological structures, true or false, that had ever appeared in the world.

Thus Plato's system embraces a '*το αγαθον*,' a '*λογος*,' or '*νους*,' and a '*ψυχη κοσμου*.' The '*το αγαθον*,' or *supreme good*, this philosopher, and all his followers call '*το ον*,' '*το οντως ον*,' '*το αυτο ον*,' that is, the *being*, the *very being*, the *self-being*—and they say, "*το οντως ον εστιν το αιδιον, αγεννητον, και αφθαρτον—the very* "*being is eternal*, UNBEGOTTEN, or rather (if I may "be forgiven for coining a new term) INGENER-"ABLE *and incorruptible*;" according to the maxim of the philosophy, then received, that '*generation* 'and *corruption* are correlates;' which in fact is the case,

case—since there is no *generated* being, which can claim exemption from *corruption*, he only excepted, of whom it was prophesied, "Thou wilt not "suffer *thine holy one to see corruption.*" This high privilege the Platonists assigned to the 'το αγαθον,' their *first* person. The 'λογος,' or *second* person, they always term 'γεννημα πρωτογονον, &c.—that is, the '*first generated begotten*,' &c. The consequence of which appellation, they perhaps neither designed nor foresaw. Such was the effect of human wisdom, jumbling its own fancies with Hebraic traditions, literally verifying St Paul's character of them—

"Φασκοντες ειναι σοφοι εμωρανθησαν[1]."

'Setting up to be philosophers, they became idiots.'

Yet this Platonic philosophy, which set out with admitting a kind of a *Trine* theology, soon got into great repute, whether from the preferable nature of the system itself, or from the veneration paid to its author. And this repute it continued to enjoy, through a succession of professors, down to the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus. This monarch, the second of the Macedonian kings of Egypt, after Alexander's conquest, established, in the city of Alexandria, a school, expressly for the purpose of disseminating the philosophy of Plato. There, under a series of able masters, such as Potamon, Armonius, Plotinus, Porphyry, Jamblichus, (who was contemporary with Constantine and his sons), &c. it

[1] Romans i. 22.

it was taught with much celebrity; until, from the many sects into which it had been progressively divided, it landed in downright scepticism; and will be found, upon examination, to be at the bottom of all the woeful and alarming *infidelity* of the present day.

But before I proceed to applv these historical facts to the subject in hand, I must not overlook what, in my idea, appears to have afforded the second and third causes, to which may be assigned the introduction of the term '*eternal g neration*,' into theological language. The Septuagint translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, in my opinion, merits, after the Platonic philosophy, to be ranked as the

IId cause for this introduction. This translation, you have no need to be informed, is generally reported to have been executed at the desire of that same Ptolemy Philadelphus, who erected the Platonic school at Alexandria. But whether this be the case or not, is unimportant, since the version of the Septuagint was certainly in vulgar use at the time of our Saviour's appearance, and was, for a long time after, the only translation to which the christian writers could have recourse; some of whom went so far in its favour, as even to prefer it to the original.

That there are in this translation many beautiful elucidations of the Hebrew original, I am ready

to own. And I am equally ready to own, that wherever its language is, totidem verbis, adduced in the New Testament, its authority is unquestionable. Yet as these instances are but few, we are at full liberty to examine what is not so adduced, by the Hebrew standard, and to admit or reject accordingly. Now, with reference to our present subject, there are three passages, which the Septuagint translators have rendered in a manner which the Hebrew original disclaims, and have thereby tended not a little to introduce the doctrines to which I am objecting. The *first* is the passage in the 110th Psalm, already quoted [1]—"from the womb before "the morning star I have begotten thee—" εκ γαστρος "προ εωσφορου εγεννησα σε," which rendering, I repeat, is not only different from the words of the Psalmist, but, as usually applied, is contrary to the Psalmist's obvious meaning.

The 110th Psalm is evidently directed to the אדני, "Adoni," on the right hand of *Jehovah*; that is, to the "*made—Lord*[2]," to the "man of the "right hand[3]," "to Christ[4]," to the "priest after "the order of Melchisedec[5]," to him "who was "to *drink* of the torrent in the way[6];" consequently either to the *humanity* singly, or (in Origen's

[1] See Letter VI. p. 49.

[2] Acts ii. 36. God hath MADE that same Jesus, &c. both LORD, &c.

[3] Ps. lxxx. 17. [4] St Matth. xxii. 41—45.

[5] Heb. v. 4. 10. [6] St Matth. xxvi. 42.

gen's style) to the "συνθετον τι," the *compound* person; but, *in no way* restrictive to *pure* Deity. In this case, although the Psalmist's noun ילדתך, "*thy birth*," (as our translators have literally rendered it,) should bear to be transformed into the "εγεννησα σε—*I have begotten thee*," of the Septuagint; yet still must it have the same *object* of address, with the psalm of which it is a part; and, without admitting of the sense of "ETERNALLY *begotten*" would convey no other meaning, than that which I have shewn to be the import of the words "*begotten before all worlds*," in the Nicene creed[1].

The *second* passage, to the rendering of which, as given in the Septuagint, I feel in duty bound to object, is the following from the book of Proverbs, "יהוה קנני—The Lord '*possessed*' me, in the beginning[2]," &c. This is rendered in a manner still more corrupted, and more dangerous than that above discussed. "Κυριος εκτισε με, &c.—The Lord CREATED me," &c. a translation, for which there is no palliative whatever—as its effects will, in the sequel, shew.

The *third* objectionable passage is one which, though not differing so glaringly from the original as the other two, has, I suspect, been the means of introducing, not only in the early times, but in latter ages, a peculiarity both of sentiment and of

[1] See Letter V. p. 34 et seq. [2] Prov. viii. 22.

expression. It is no less than the grand declaration of the *evangelical* prophet Isaiah—" his name shall " be called *wonderful, counsellor*[1]," &c. which the Septuagint have translated in terms sufficiently consonant with the prophet's meaning, but not fully expressive of it—" μεγαλης βουλης αγγελος," &c.—" the *angel of the great counsel*," &c.

This *paraphrase*, for it deserves not the name of a *translation*, has, in my opinion, paved the way for that much agitated, and much misunderstood doctrine of " *angels*," which perhaps, with some Platonic mixture, has constituted the

IIId cause of the introduction of the terms ' *eter-* ' *nal generation*,' and been the parent of the many various, and scarcely reconcileable opinions, regarding the ' LOGOS,' as well as the great support of the *debasing* system of belief which began at so early a period of christianity, and which has prevailed to this very day.

[1] Isaiah ix. 6.

LET-

LETTER XI.

IT having been the purport of the preceding Letter to particularize the causes to which, more or less, the introduction of the terms '*eternal generation*,' into theological language, falls in my opinion to be assigned, I shall now proceed to apply to the subject in hand, the arguments and facts which have been briefly laid before you.

We have discussed the nature, and the probable foundation of Plato's philosophy. Let us next examine whether, and how far, this plausible and much esteemed system of Plato had influence on the language of the christian fathers, and insinuated itself into their writings, from an early period. To this examination the writings of the celebrated Justin Martyr, who flourished within fifty years of Ignatius bishop of Antioch, will afford us the necessary assistance.

Before his conversion to christianity, Justin Martyr had been a zealous disciple of the philosopher Plato. This, though Justin himself had not confessed

fessed it, might have been discovered from his works; and particularly from his warm, and scarcely warrantable attachment to the tutelar saint of Plato, Socrates; of whom he is bold to say, when treating of the enmity of the devils against the the truth—"ου γαρ μονον Ἑλλησι δια Σωκρατες ὑπο λογε "ελεγχθη ταυτα"[1]—these things were reproved by the "*Logos*, through *the mouth of Socrates*." Nay, he farther says[2], "*that they who lived by reason were* "*christians*;" among whom he hesitates not to reckon *Socrates*—and classes him with Abraham and Elijah. In enlargement of which unjustifiable panegyric, Mr Reeves, the translator of Justin Martyr's "Apology," is very angry with Tertullian, who held a very different opinion of Socrates, and who calls his "dæmon"—pessimum revera pedagogum—*the worst of all tutors*. Mr Reeves' words are as follow: "When I find Socrates employing "all his reason to bring men off from barren specu- "lations to the knowledge of themselves, and the "practice of substantial virtue; when I find him "the greatest master of his passions, the most "judicious despiser of riches within his reach, "the most temperate, humble, courteous, inoffensive "man living in the gentile world; when I find him "encouraged by his *dæmon*, to die for the profes- "sion of the *one true God*; when Justin Martyr "says, that *he*, by his share of reason, did among "the

[1] See 1 Apology, c. 5. [2] 1 Apology, c. xli.

" the Greeks what the *Logos* himself did among " the Barbarians, and that *both were condemned for* " *the same good design;* who, after this, I say, can " think Socrates possessed and governed by an evil " spirit? Why not divinely assisted to preach " down idolatry, and bring moral righteousness in- " to practice, and by such means to prepare and " qualify the heathen world for the revelation of " the Messiah?"

Upon this quotation, which will, I hope, be acknowledged by every true christian to include its own proper censure, I shall make no comment. I feel it however incumbent on me to notice the glaring contrariety of sentiment regarding this same *Socrates*, the idol still of modern veneration, and *that*, between two writers nearly contemporary, Justin Martyr and Tertullian. The former holds him to be inspired by the *Logos* himself! The latter holds him to be actuated by a *devil!* How is this contrariety of character to be accounted for? In no other way, as far as I am capable of discriminating, but by ascribing Justin Martyr's *eulogium* to the secret workings of the Platonic philosophy; Tertullian's *censure* to his having been " addicted" to the system of " no" philosophical " master" whatever; all of whom he calls " Hæreticorum Patriarchæ," the " *Patriarchs of the Heretics* [1]." Indeed, it is but natural to suppose, that according to what Justin Martyr

[1] See Lib. contra Hermogen. c. iv.

Martyr has *expressed* regarding Socrates, so would he have us *understand* his sentiments to be respecting his old master Plato; whose more sublime doctrines and definitions he has artfully infused into his own writings. Thus we find him, in his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, using the very language which Plato is found to use—"μονος γαρ αγεννητος, "και αφθαρτος Θεος, και δια τουτο Θεος εστι—*God is* "*the only unbegotten, and incorruptible, and, upon* "*that account, is God.*" To this, in the sense, and under the application which Ignatius has made of the term "αγεννητος," no objection needs be offered. But this sense and application are not allowed by a certain class of writers, whom we find quoting and twisting the term to their own purpose. And indeed, the sense and application which the language of Ignatius bears, Justin himself disclaims, when he writes "μονος ιδιως υιος του Θεου γεγεννηται—the Son alone is *properly* begotten of God[1]," which points out, and, in fact, limits the use of "αγεννητος," in the opinion of Justin Martyr.

Whether Ignatius, who, as we have seen, first used the term αγεννητος, borrowed it from Plato or not, I cannot say. Bishop Pearson to be sure asserts, that Athanasius said, the term was taken from the heathen[2]. But, for my own part, I cannot allow myself to think, that a man possessed of the plain simple piety, and heavenly charity, of which Ignatius

[1] See 1 Apol. p. 46.

[2] See Vindic. p. 127.

Ignatius shewed himself to be possessed, would, in such an august description of the great "physician" —ιατρος— of souls, have had recourse to Plato for appropriate expressions. There is nothing in this venerable Father's writings which betrays an acquaintance with Plato; nay more, his use of the term "αγεννητος" is contrary to Plato's restriction of it.

That Justin Martyr, however, intentionally adopted the term from Plato, and used it in the very sense of his heathen master, is clear from the quotations just adduced; and from the triumphant acknowledgement of those, who, to this day, espouse the doctrine of 'eternal generation.' And, for aught I know to the contrary, Justin Martyr may have been the first christian writer who used the term in the Platonic sense; unless perhaps Athenagoras, who, as I have shewn[1], calls the Son of God, 'πρωτον γεννημα τω πατρι,' &c. and who, being an Athenian, it may be presumed, had been a Platonist also.

From the time of these two early Apologists of the christian faith, the Platonic language, and the Platonic doctrine, on the important article now under consideration, seem to have spread, and to have become current; nay, even to have been accompanied by every unbecoming inference, which the

[1] See Letter III. p. 22.

conceit of philosophy was accustomed to draw from it. It is also worthy of remark, and can hardly have escaped the notice of those who have studied the history of these times, that, as the Platonic school of Alexandria was soon after its establishment in high repute, and the only theological school of note for the eastern parts of the Gentile world; so, it has fallen out, that the greater part of the christian fathers who, at that period, are found treating on the subject of "generation" *in* Deity, or of the "generation" *of* Deity, are citizens of Alexandria, either by birth or residence; among whom it may suffice to enumerate Clemens, Origen, Dionysius, Alexander, Arius, and Athanasius. This, if it amounts not to a proof, affords, at least, a strong probability, that such Platonic ingredients, as, I think, I see reason to complain of, had infused themselves into their writings.

What scripture authorities do offer themselves in support of their reasonings we have already seen. To convince, however, the young and inexperienced student of the lengths to which men will go in support of a favourite hypothesis, I shall in so far recur to the subject of scripture authority, as to point out a text which has been, by no less a person than Athanasius, wantonly impressed into the service of the doctrine before us.—"Who shall declare his "*generation*'[1]?" exclaims the prophet Isaiah, when treating

[1] Isaiah liii. 8.

treating of the Messiah. Whence, it is argued, that as his *generation* is *ineffable*, it must therefore be *divine*. An argument this, which is supported at no less expence, than doing the most manifest ungrammatical violence to the Hebrew vocable דור, *dur*, (from which is derived the English term 'en-'dure), and to the Greek vocable 'γενεα;' neither of which has the least relation to the word '*genera-*'*tion*,' in the sense now under discussion; but both of which do signify '*course of life*,' '*succession of ge-*'*nerations*,' '*descent*,' &c. This appears from the frequent use of both vocables, in Scripture, to denote that familiar and easily understood sentiment, implied in the words "*from generation to genera-*"*tion*;" words, which, no reader whatever dare assert, did, even for a moment, convey to his mind, the most distant idea of the *generation of the Son of God*.

At the head of the Alexandrian catalogue above mentioned, I might have placed an earlier writer than any of them, who, although not a christian, has maintained a sort of oracular repute in the christian world to the present hour, viz. Philo the Jew. He was an Alexandrian, and was employed by the Alexandrian Jews, as their ambassador to the Roman emperor Caligula, shortly after our Saviour's ascension. Yet Philo, for what reason is unknown, takes no direct notice either of Christ, or of his apostles, although contemporary with them. His writings, indeed, are chiefly in the *allegorical*

style; and, by reason of their Platonic modes of expression, have contributed greatly to obscure, if not to corrupt the language of christian theology, on the point of our Lord's Deity, as I hope I shall be able to shew, in further prosecution of our subject.

I have already hinted, that the natural consequences of Plato's system, viz. the doctrine of "*inferiority*," &c. for which Dr Bull is so zealous an advocate, crept into theological language with the doctrine itself. Of this we have sundry examples from the pen of Plato's quondam disciple, Justin Martyr; while we have examples of after-writers, on the catholic side, impugning both Justin's language and his positions. Thus Dr Bull is often found quoting Justin Martyr, and after him Origen, as characterizing the Logos by the title "δευτερον Θεον—a *second God*;" while St Basil hesitates not to say, "δευτερον δε Θεον ουδεπω και τημερον ακηκοα-μεν—we never to this day heard of a *second* God [1]." But more particularly in proof of Christ's subordination, does Dr Bull introduce Justin Martyr, in three different places, calling him—"δυναμιν μετα "τον ατρεπτον, και αει οντα Θεον, μετα τον πατερα παντων, και "δεσποτην Θεον, μετα τον πρωτον Θεον—the power *after* "the unchangeable and eternal God, *after* the God "who is Father and Lord of all, *after* the first "God:"

[1] See his book, "Of the Holy Ghost," c. 18.

"God[1]:" language which Mr Whiston, totidem verbis, is seen to quote, in support of his Arian creed[2].

On the other hand, Dr Waterland quotes Gregory Nyssen saying, in his work contra Eunomium,—"Ει γαρ Θεος μεν ὁ υἱος, παν δε μετα τον πατερα Θεος ουκ εστι, "δηλον ὁτι εν τω πατρι, και μη μετα τον πατερα τον υἱον ειναι ὁ "λογος μαρτυρειται—ει τις εν μετα τον Θεον εστι, κτισις τουτο "και ὑ Θεος δια των ειρημενων ευρισκεται—If the Son be "God, and whatever is *after* the Father is *not God*, "it is plain that the word testifies, that the Son is "*in* the Father, and not *after* him: for whatever is "*after* God, is *not God*, but *a creature*[3]:" while the Athanasian creed says expressly, "in the Trinity "none is afore or *after* other," in direct contradiction of the 'μετα τον πατερα,' &c. of Justin;—"none "is *greater* or *less* than another,"—in direct contradiction of Dr Bull's "*major* quoad divinitatem!"

After Justin Martyr, we find Clemens Alexandrinus calling Christ "πρωτοκτιστον Σοφιαν—"*the first* "*created wisdom*[4];" a title to which the Arians lay claim, in support of their cause, as the Apostolical Constitutions use the very same language—"κτιστη "θεια σοφια—created wisdom."

Dr

1 See Dr Bull, "De subordinatione," &c. Sect. IV. c. 2.

2 See Whiston's "Primitive Christianity," p. 182.

3 See Waterland's "Sermons," &c. Serm. IV. p. 125.

4 See Strom. 5. p. 591. "On the faith of the Septuagint Trans. of "Prov. viii. 21.

Dr Bull however comes forward in vindication of Clemens; and tells us, that the word '*κτιστος*,' as used by Clemens, signifies '*γενητος*.' For this he quotes the authority, 'præstantissimi viri Henrici 'Valesii,' who says, "that the old divines, by the "word *κτιστος*, understood not only creation out of "nothing, but, in general, all kinds of *production*, "whether *eternal* or temporary[1]." We have already seen the word '*γενητος*, as used by St Ignatius, made synonymous with the word '*κτιστος*,' to serve one hypothesis; we now see the word '*κτιστος*,' as used by St Clemens, made synonymous with '*γενητος*,' to serve a different hypothesis. The abstract term '*production*,' however, which Henricus Valesius chuses to use, is far from being of the wished for service to the hypothesis of Dr Bull; since when the words '*produced*,' and '*unproduced*,' are set in contradistinction—their import is near akin to the words 'begotten' and 'unbegotten,' the use of which Dr Bull and his friends will not admit.

Next to Clemens, in the Alexandrian list, stands the celebrated Origen. He was not only Clemens' disciple, but a man distinguished for extent of genius, for fertility of invention, and for laboriousness of application. It is however no easy matter to determine on what side he and his writings are to be placed. Some of his expressions are purely catholic; while others may be said, at least, to lean to

[1] See Dr Bull's Defensio, Sect. 2. c. 6. § 8.

to the other side. For my own part, I believe, that Origen's creed will be found, upon the whole, to be sound in the article of our Saviour's true and proper Deity; although his philosophical bent of mind, and peculiar sentiments, being not fully understood by his numerous admirers, or equally numerous enemies, have been interpreted as betraying him into expressions rather too favourable to the belief of the Arian doctrine of the Son's inferiority. Dr Bull has laboured hard to clear the character of Origen, and to do away the suspicions which the learned Huetius, bishop of Avranches, has brought forward against him, by endeavouring to shew, that Origen attributed all divine perfections to the Logos, *self-existence only excepted.* This *perfection*, one should think, was as necessary to the possession of true Deity as any other. But it is a perfection which Dr Bull will, on no account, concede to the second and third persons in the holy Trinity. Thus when Origen had ventured to apply the title '*αυτοθεος*' to Christ, Dr Bull, after lessening, by misinterpretation, its obvious meaning, viz. "*God of himself*," balances the title against another of Origen's own invention, viz. '*αυτουιος*,' which last, he says, with no little degree of sarcasm, it would be nonsense to interpret—'a se-ipso filius—*Son of himself.*' Yet at such an *interpretation* Justin Martyr seems to point, in the following passage of his works; "*το πνευμα ον και την δυναμιν την παρα του Θεου, ουδεν αλλο νοησαι θεμις, η τον λογον*—

the

"the Spirit, therefore, and the *power of God*[1], it is "not lawful to *interpret* of any other, but the Lo-"gos[2]." And in another place, he says, αλλ' "ον τροπον διαλεγει θεου σαρκοποιηθεις Ιησους Χριστος ὁ σωτηρ "ἡμων—after the same manner that Jesus Christ "our Saviour was made flesh *by the God Logos*, or "by the Logos of God[3]." On this passage, Mr Reeves, the translator, has a long note, in which he tells us, "that this seemed to him, at first sight, to "be a harsh interpretation." Yet Mr Reeves concludes from Justin's doctrine, "that the human ge-"neration of Christ may very justly be ascribed to "*himself* as *God!*" Clemens however expressly asserts—"προελθων δε ὁ λογος δημιουργιας αιτιος, επειτα "και ἑαυτον γεννα, ὁταν ὁ λογος σαρξ γενηται—*the Logos* "*coming forth the cause of the creation, afterwards did* "*also beget himself, when the word was made flesh*[4]." Nay, Dr Waterland remarks, that Irenæus seems to "understand the Holy Spirit, and Spirit of God, "of the second person, the *Logos himself*, coming "down upon the virgin[5]."

Whether these Fathers were right or not, in such an explication of Scripture, it is not for me to decide. I merely observe, from the quotations, with which I have furnished the reader, that Origen had ample authority, especially the authority of his master

1 See Luke i. 35. 2 See 1 Apology.
3 See 1 Apology. 4 See Strom. c. 5.
5 Importance, &c. p. 303.

ter, Clemens, for using the term ‘ αυτουιος,’ in the very sense so much derided by Dr Bull, viz. ‘ *Son of him-* ‘ *self.*’ This being the case, is there aught, I will ask, to prevent the pronoun ‘ αυτος,’ when in composition with ‘ Θεος,’ from having the same meaning, viz. ‘ *God of himself?*’ Nay, is there aught to prevent it from being thus rendered; and thus prevent Jesus Christ from being termed, ‘ God of ‘ himself, or *self-existent;*’ a theological term which, notwithstanding the perplexities that metaphysical science may incumber it with, or the restrictive application that attachment to a favourite hypothesis may put upon it, will, to the unprejudiced mind, appear to have a meaning inseparable from the belief of *true* and *proper Deity:* witness the case of the pious and venerable Bishop Hall, when employed in commenting on the language, ascribed to the Son of God, both by the prophet Isaiah, and the evangelist St John—“ I am the first, and I am the last,” viz. “ I am the true and eternal God, who so was “ before all things, that I gave being unto all things, “ and (whatever should come of all things, which “ have their being from me) am everlasting, having “ *my being from myself,* infinite, and independent.” So extremely natural is it, in the hour of devout contemplation, for man to make *self-existence* and *independence* characteristic attributes of Deity. Indeed this same pronoun, ‘ αυτος,’ seems to me to belong more immediately to Deity, than some may be aware.

In the Septuagint translation it is often used, as in itself characteristic of the Deity. Thus where, in the English translation, the language is—" my ' presence,' ' thy presence,' " it is in the Septuagint translation " αυτος," ' *I myself*,' ' *thou thyself*.' Thus, where we read, " he brought thee out in his " sight," the Septuagint has it, " he *himself* brought " thee out [2]." And thus, where it is, in our translation, said, " the angel of his presence saved " them," in strict conformity with the Hebrew original; the Septuagint translators make a distinction, and read " ουδε αγγελος, αλλ' αυτος—*not* an an- " gel, but he *himself* saved them [3]." Again, in the notable passage of the Psalmist, which St Paul applies to Christ [4], viz. " *Thou art the same*, and " thy years shall not fail;" אתה הוא in Hebrew; " συ δε ὁ αυτος ει" in the Greek of the Septuagint version; parallel in every respect to the words of St Paul [5], " Jesus Christ—ὁ αυτος—*the same* yester- " day, to-day, and for ever." This title of " ὁ αυ- " τος," as applied by St Paul, in a quotation from the 102d Psalm, to Christ, has ever been urged, by the orthodox believer, as a strong concurrent proof of our Saviour's Deity: and why, in conjunction with Θεος, it should not be so applied, or given to him, in a sense *inferior* to that in which it is applied to the Father, no other reason can be assigned,

[1] Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15—the Hebrew word is פנים—" *faces*."
[2] Deut. iv. 37. [3] Isaiah lxiii. 9.
[4] Heb. i. 12. [5] Heb. xiii. 8.

signed, but that such *refusal*, or *inferior application* is required in maintaining the *doctrine of eternal generation*. Indeed self-existence is such a distinguishing characteristic of Deity, that no Being can properly be called Θεος, unless at the same time, we believe him to be αυτοθεος. The great name Jehovah is generally understood to signify self-existent: and as this name is in Scripture confessedly given to the Word, and the Spirit, it must be difficult to say, why in being so given, it should be stript of its radical signification.

But the conjunct epithet 'αυτοθεος,' is not the only high title, to which two different meanings are assigned, to answer two different applications.—There is another of equal importance, though in a negative form, which has met with similar treatment. For thus says Dr Berryman, "though it "be the peculiar character of the Father, to be "'αναρχος;' as that word is understood to denote "him *unoriginate*, or God of himself, yet the Son "likewise is 'αναρχος,' *without beginning*, as the same "word is understood to have a reference to time, "or beginning of existence [1]." When men give way

[1] See Dr Berryman's "Historical Account of the Trinitarian Con-"troversy," p. 79. This author's reasoning seems borrowed from the Dutch and Genevan Notes on the Greek εν αρχη of Moses, "*in the be-*"*ginning* of time," and the εν αρχη of St John, "*before all* time," where it would be no difficult matter to shew, that both these inspired writers had in view the very same object, though not the object commonly supposed.

to quibbling like this, to argue with them becomes useless; or, what is worse, no argument can be, with safety, committed to their management. It was made matter of complaint against the schoolmen, that their modes of reasoning, such as 'distinguo, et quoad hoc, et quoad illud,' and the like, tended only to involve and obscure any given subject. But surely neither scholastic disquisition, nor theological discussion ever afforded matter of complaint, more just, or more worthy of animadversion, than that, against which it has been my object in the present letter to complain; as exhibited in the discussions of those who, having taken a Plato, or a Philo, for their guide, have contributed so much to obscure, if not to corrupt the sound language of christian theology, on the subject of the Deity of Christ Jesus.

LET-

LETTER XII.

IN the foregoing Letter, having briefly detailed the expositions contained in the writings of the *Alexandrian* Fathers, to whom, as favouring the same hypothesis, on the subject of *self-generation* (if I may be allowed the expression), Dr Waterland adds Tertullian, Novatian, Cyprian, and Lactantius, among the *Latin* Fathers, I have sufficiently proved how early something like '*generation*' was ascribed even to the *Logos*. I say not, that this was done as yet, in the passive sense of Plato's term '*γεννημα*.' But I have no doubt, that the writers above noticed, by making Christ himself '*γεννημα*,' although in an active sense, had a reference to Plato's doctrine, and spoke a language equally intelligible. Yet, after all, it could not be *divine*, much less '*eternal generation*,' which Justin Martyr and Clemens Alexandrinus had in view; nor could the term '*αυτουι*,' used by Origen, have the least affinity to the doctrine of '*eternal filiation*,' which was afterwards introduced, and which is asserted still.

I scruple not however, to say, that this is *only* asserted

asserted; and assertion, without proof, amounts to nothing in theological discussion. 'Almost all the 'philosophic Fathers,' says a Mr Samuel Hill, 'from Justin Martyr down to Tertullian, though 'they all own his (Christ's) personal co-eternity 'with the Father; and none of them, except Ter-'tullian once, ever seem to deny an *eternity* of his '*Sonship*, yet, for REASONS, HARDLY NOW TO BE 'REACHED, they ascribe a *filiation* to the Father's 'emission of the *Logos*, to the creation of the world, 'and providence over it, in their accounts hereof 'to Jews, heathens, and heretics, to whom they did 'not open the whole mystery of our theology, per-'haps on account of their prejudice or incapacity, 'and went no higher than some strains of apocry-'phal theology, which seemed to them to warrant 'this notion'.[1] Here are assertions enough, but they are abundantly objectionable. For, I will ask, 'Who are the philosophic Fathers between Justin 'Martyr, and Tertullian?' and, 'What avails it, 'although these Fathers do not deny the *eternity* of 'the *Sonship*?' Is it a logical conclusion, that, because they do not deny this eternity, they ought therefore to be held as affirming it? Tertullian, it is confessed, does deny "the eternity of the Son-"ship." And in what manner does he deny it? Not in the manner in which one denies the unsupported averment of another; but he denies it by

[1] *See* "*Harmony* of the S. S." by Mr Samuel Hill. p. 127.

by adducing, hypothetically, the "*non-eternity* of "the relation between *Father* and *Son*," along with another received axiom—"the *non-eternity* of rela- "tion between *judge* and *crime*;" whereby he confutes the impious absurdity of "matter being co- "eternal with God." Instead therefore of proving what Dr Bull and his friends think that they have proved from Tertullian's denial of "the eternal "Sonship, I am of opinion, that the denial of Tertullian proves the direct contrary; viz. "that the "non-eternity of the Sonship was, at that time, the "current belief of that part of the christian church, "with which Tertullian was best acquainted." The '*αει υιος*—*always Son*,' for which Athanasius contended, and others to this day do contend, was not then in vogue; and I do not remember to have met even with a quotation, from any writer contemporary with Tertullian, which expressly asserts this *eternity*; unless something of this sort can be drawn from the *creed* (as it is called) of Gregory Thaumaturgus: a composition unknown for a hundred years after Gregory; and produced under such suspicious circumstances, as protestant writers think themselves bound to disclaim; although, to serve a favourite hypothesis, they have been known to admit the composition itself, and to argue from its contents.

These contents bear, that there is "One God, "Father of the living word—perfect parent of one "perfect, Father of the only begotten Son: and one

"Lord

" Lord μονος εκ μονε, Θεω εκ Θεε, one of one, God of " God, true Son of the true Father—αοραται αορατε, " και αφθαρτω αφθαρτε, και αθανατος αθανατε, και αιδιος " αιδιε—invisible of invisible, incorruptible of incor- " ruptible, immortal of immortal, and eternal of " eternal." Here we have the character of the first and second persons of the trinity, summed up in language abundantly descriptive; yet, the composer of this creed, be who he may, has not had the courage to use the term, which I have before alluded to, as a necessary deduction from such premises, and directly to call the first person—" THE FATHER " OF GOD."

It is also worthy of being remarked, that though the composer of this creed makes use of the preposition εκ—" Θεος εκ Θεε," as in the Nicene creed, God of God; in four of the Greek selections above made, he drops the preposition, and uses the genitive case, in regimine. To the Greek scholar this must necessarily suggest a difference of sense; and may, in some measure, justify the explication, which I have already offered [1] of that expression in the creed of Nice, upon which so much weight of authority, in behalf of the doctrine of *' eternal ' generation,'* is laid.

But admitting this *wonderful* composition to have been

[1] See Letter V. p. 33. et seq.

been the genuine work of Gregory Thaumaturgus[1], let it be remembered, that this Gregory had been, under Origen, bred at Alexandria. There, it is at least presumable, that he may have formed the same Platonic attachments, which characterize his master Origen; and, among others, his attachment to the expression "πατηρ τȣ λογȣ ζωντος—*Father* "*of the living word*," with which his creed begins. To this expression, I am confident, the Scripture affords no countenance. Besides it will be no easy matter to establish the accuracy of the terms, in which the expression is couched. *Father* and *Son* are correlates, every body must acknowledge, with or without the adjunct '*eternal*;' insomuch that we find Dionysius of Alexandria,(also Origen's disciple), founding, on this very circumstance, a defence of himself, from the charges preferred against him by some of his contemporaries. In distinguishing the '*Persons*,' against Sabellius, who confounded them, Dionysius was charged with having approached too near to "dividing the *substance*." But more especially was he blamed for insisting so much on that declaration, made by our Lord himself, "I am "the true vine, and my Father is the husband-"man." Dionysius thus answers for himself, 'The *Father* being eternal, the *Son* must be eter-'nal too—Light of Light. The *names* by me men-'tioned are *undivided* and *inseparable*. When I

[1] Had it first appeared, as was said, under the assistance of the Blessed Virgin, and of St John, the admission could not have been withheld.

'named the *Father*, before I mentioned the *Son*, 'I signified the *Son* in the *Father*. If any of my 'accusers suspect that, because I called God *Creator* and *Former* of all things, I made him *Creator* 'of Christ, let him consider, that I before stiled '*him Father*, and so the *Son* was included in 'him'[1],' &c. It is easily perceived, that these are arguments, let their weight be great or small it matters not, which Dionysius could never have urged, as arising out of the expression, used by Gregory, "*Father of the living word.*" How then must we condemn that mode of controversial management so much in use, even at this very day, of jumbling terms together, and of substituting, ad libitum, one for another? By this mode of procedure, any '*quid*' may be drawn out of any '*quo*;' and a little controversial skill is only wanting, as in the case before us, to confound, by the promiscous use of the terms 'WORD' and 'SON,' two titles belonging, unquestionably, to the same divine person; but, in their radical and legitimate sense, titles of the most distinct, and not to be confounded, acceptation.

Among numberless instances that might be adduced of the same kind, I find the author of a "Judgment of the Jewish Church," thus commenting upon the text of St John, "there are three "that bear record in heaven, the *Father*, the *Word*, and

[1] See Dr Waterland's "Importance," &c. p. 240.

"and the *Holy Ghost*," &c. 'This personal dis-'tinction supposes the *Father* not to be the *Son*, 'and that the *Son* is not the *Father*—revelation 'teaching, that the *Son is begotten* of the Father, 'and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the *Father* '*and the Son*, or from the *Father by the Son*[1].' Now it is almost unnecessary to observe, that, whatever revelation may teach elsewhere, regarding this '*generation*' and '*procession*," it is manifest that this text of St John teaches no such thing. Nay it is manifest, that the text contains not the title '*Son*' at all. And that the association between the terms '*Father*' and '*Word*,' is foreign indeed to that between *Father* and *Son*; being equally distinct as is the association between '*Father*' and '*Holy Ghost*,' of which '*generation*' has never been deemed a necessary consequence. I cannot therefore too often recur to the condemnation of that system, which introduces a confusion of Scripture terms, for the sake of particular deductions. It is a system which sound logic would not for a moment tolerate. It has done the Scripture doctrine of Christ's 'thinking it no robbery to be EQUAL WITH 'GOD,' essential injury; for proof of which, I may safely refer the reader to the mass of learned altercation, with which modern times have teemed, on this important subject.

[1] See "Judgement," &c. by Dr Allix, a French refugee in the reign of James VII.—ch. viii.

But this Platonic degradation of the Logos, from the high rank in which revelation does manifestly place him, is not the only impure mixture which has adulterated the theological language of those writers, by whom the philosopher Plato, and his Alexandrian disciples were held in repute. It is well known that a principal part of Plato's theological system was founded on the assumed belief of certain 'δαιμονες' and 'μεδιοξυμοι θεοι,' *dæmons* and *middle gods*; who, if they could ever have been supposed to claim any origin, must have owed that origin to tradition, either corrupted or misunderstood. There is therefore too much ground to *suppose*, if not to *conclude*, that this doctrine of dæmons, &c. with the 'Logos' of Plato the *Heathen*, and of Philo the *Jew*, at their head, may have stolen imperceptibly into the writings of the *Christian* Platonists, and thus have wrought out by degrees, the scheme of '*generation*,' and '*subordination*' in Deity. Would Justin Martyr have otherwise espoused the cause of the 'dæmon' of Socrates? or would Mr Reeves have otherwise vindicated Justin's conduct[1]? Besides, it will not be denied, that though *not* under the title of 'gods,' or of 'dæmons,' yet under the *scriptural* designation of '*angels*,' somewhat of the philosophical system maintained in the Alexandrian school, had been introduced into the christian system.

That

[1] See Letter XI.

That we read, in the Old Testament, of 'angelic appearances,' is certain. Yet, in no theological point has scripture been more wrested, or more departed from, than in the doctrine that has been drawn from these appearances. The Papists, in so doing, have endeavoured to vindicate their 'angel worship.' But Protestants know well, that what have been termed the *angelic appearances* of Scripture ought to be viewed as *appearances* of *Deity*—of the 'LOGOS,' in particular. This Dr Bull acknowledges[1]; but fails not to detract from the acknowledgement, by blending it with some strange and ill-founded observations—'The Son of God,' he says, 'was signified by the name of '*angel*,' because he assumed a body or visible species, *such as* '*angels use to take*[2].' And again, 'In these appearances, the Son of God was called an angel, 'because he imitated the *way* and *manner in which* '*angels appeared to men.*' Would not one, on reading such a statement as this, suppose, that there existed, in the canon of Scripture, a regular detail of the 'way and manner' in which created angels did appear unto men, prior to the time when the Son of God assumed a similar 'body, a visible species,' such as theirs, and prior to his being 'called an angel, because he imitated their way and 'manner of appearing?' Let us then examine minutely

[1] See "Defensio," &c. S. 1. cap. 1.

[2] See "Defensio," &c. S. 1. cap. 1. § 11.

nutely the Scripture record, whether such a detail be contained in it or not.

The first mention made of the word 'ANGEL,' in Scripture, is in the history of *Hagar*, who bare unto Abram his Son *Ishmael*[1]. Now there had been *appearances* of *Deity* before this period; and it is for my purpose enough to remark, that both the inspired historian, and the christian Fathers, do expressly call the *angel* who appeared unto Hagar, by the *incommunicable* name '*Jehovah*.'

But the apparition vouchsafed to Abraham is thought of more authority than the above; and is, consequently, adduced to prove the introduction of 'created angels' into the divine economy. Although the passage merely relates, "that the Lord "appeared unto him (Abraham) in the plains of "Mamre—and he lift up his eyes, and looked, and "lo! *three men* stood by him[2]—שלשה אנשים—" literally a TRINITY of men, whom the patriarch entertained with equal reverence and equal adoration. Yet, according to Dr Bull, *two* of the three were created angels, while the *third* was the Son of God. This, I hesitate not to call, a mere gratis dictum, since except the marginal reference of the English Bible, to the text of St Paul, where 'angels' are said to have been "entertained unawares[3]," the Doctor's

[1] Gen. xvi. 7. [2] Gen. xviii. 12.

3 Heb. xiii. 2. Here the apostle may have pointed to the history of Rahab's kindness to the spies of Joshua, with the beneficial consequences of that kindness to herself, which, was this the proper place, could be further illustrated.

tor's explication is unsupported even by the *shadow* of scriptural authority. It is true, the men who "went towards Sodom[1]" are called *angels*[2], and '*men*[3],' yet it would seem, that *they* also were *Jehovah*; for "*Jehovah* rained upon Sodom," &c. "from *Jehovah* out of heaven[4]." It will therefore be more difficult than has perhaps been imagined, to bring irrefragable demonstration, that any of the *angelic appearances*, in the Old Tessament, must necessarily be construed of "*created intelligences.*" I know well, that some of the *old Fathers*, and that all the *modern schoolmen* think otherwise. But I equally well know, that it is possible, by a certain stretch of exposition, to make the Fathers say any thing whatever; if, as in this very instance, Dr Bull's elucidation be admitted respecting what Clemens Alexandrinus has said "ὁ λογος αγγελος ην—the Lo-"gos was an angel;" which the Doctor thus explains—"per angelos hominibus apparuit—*he ap-*"*peared unto men by angels.*" Indeed what Dr Bull has further asserted, although agreeing with Augustine and Petavius, is wholly without proof, viz. "that, in the *appearances* under the Old Testament, "God was not always *in* the *angel* by an especial "presence, but acted many things, *by angels alone*[5];" and then he adds, "we willingly confess, that it is "very difficult to conjecture, when a *mere angel* ap-"peared,

[1] Gen. xviii. 22. [2] Gen. xix. 1. 15.
[3] Gen. xix. 10. 12. 16. [4] Gen. xix. 24.
[5] See Def. Sect. IV. cap. 3. § 15.

"peared, or when it was *God* that *appeared in the* "*angel.*" But, is it not surprising, that an affair of such moment should be left to human *conjecture*, especially when even "to conjecture is found to be "a very difficult matter?" Yet, after all this acknowledged uncertainty, he writes thus: "Where-"ever it is evident that the *apparition* is not of a "*mere angel*, but of *God himself*, there, in strict con-"currence with the consentient judgment of primi-"tive antiquity, we constantly affirm, that not the "Father, but the Son, is to be understood."

It is obvious, that the purpose of this rule is to serve the doctrine 'Of the *Subordination*,' &c. since it is, in the section under this title, that we find it laid down: and I have long observed, that, in support of this doctrine, there is no argument more dwelt upon than that which is afforded by the designation of '*angel*,' as applied to our Saviour. The argument is simply this: "The '*Logos*' is called an '*angel*;' the word *angel* implies *being sent*; *being* "*sent* implies a state of *subordination*: therefore is "the *Son* subordinate to the *Father*." Here, however, besides the fallacy of altering the title '*Logos*,' in the first branch of this Sorites, into the title '*Son*,' in the conclusion, (a fallacy which runs through every dissertation on this subject, and is a manifest *petitio principii*), it ought previously to have been proved, that the second assumption is valid, viz. "*that the word angel implies being sent.*"— The Fathers are agreed, that the term *angel* is not appli-

cable to the *nature* of the Being so denominated, but to his *office*; and so may be used to signify '*officiator*,' '*officer*,' or '*worker*;' and *that*, where there is no reference to being *sent*. This is the radical meaning of the Hebrew term מלאך, of which 'αγγελος' is the Greek interpretation; as might be exemplified from numberless passages in the Old Testament, where the word will bear no other sense. Even the Greek 'αγγελος' does not contain in it, radically, the idea of *being sent*. Its *known, usual*, and *radical* sense is that of the Latin term *nuncius*, '*the bearer or reporter of news*:' an office which one may undertake, without "*being sent*." There is a passage in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with the Jew, Trypho, which goes to support this hypothesis, and which, coming from the pen of such a master in the Greek tongue, is the next thing to being decisive on the subject. "Ο λογος και αγ-
"γελος δε καλειται και αποστολος, αυτος γαρ απαγγελλει ὁσα
"δει γνωσθηναι, και αποστελλεται μηνυσων ὁσα απαγγελλεται—
"*the Logos* is called both *angel* and *apostle*; for he
"*declares*, as *angel*, what things ought to be known;
"and is *sent*, as *apostle*, to interpret what things are
"*declared*[1]." To balance this authority of Justin Martyr, or rather, I fear, to combat the weight of it, Dr Bull gives us a quotation from Isidore of Seville, in the following terms: 'It was the *Son*, who 'being always *sent* by the *Father*, visibly appeared 'unto men, and from this *mission*, he is properly

[1] Dial. with Trypho, p. 95.

'called an *angel*.' Yet how this passive signification of *angel*, which is neither contained in the Hebrew מלאך, nor in the Greek 'αγγελος,' nor in the Latin '*nuncius*,' came into vulgar use, I am wholly at a loss to say. One thing I know, that, but for this *passive* signification having obtained such undue regard, the Septuagint translation of the words of Isaiah had not been made such use of by the advocates of Christ's *subordination*.

Thus Dr Knight, one of those advocates, contrives to state a parallel between the words of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, as translated also by the Septuagint; and, from the difference of dignity between '*Lord*' and '*angel*,' would infer the same difference between '*Father*' and '*Son*,' regardless of the term פלא, '*wonderful*,' as used by Isaiah, or the term גדול, '*great*,' used by Jeremiah; both of which, as they express no such difference, are often joined together, as constituent epithets in the character of *absolute Deity*[1].' It might perhaps be thought too much for me to say, that the Septuagint translators, being men of like passions with others, had a favourite hypothesis to serve. I own however, that I am not wholly free of suspicion as to this matter, from a circumstance already noticed, viz. the sense which they have, by their unjustifiable

[1] See Knight's Serm. p. 163. Note. The Septuagint translate, as we have already seen, Isaiah ix. 6. μεγαλης βουλης αγγελος, while they translate Jerem. xxxii. 19. κυριος μεγαλης βουλης, "The *Lord* of the "great counsel."

fiable rendering, imposed upon another text of Isaiah [1]—"The *angel* of his presence saved them;" which they translate "ὁ πρεσβυς, οὐδε αγγελος, αλλ' "αυτος—not a *legate*, nor an *angel*, but HE HIM-"SELF;" thus plainly indicating *inferiority*, unsupported by the original. Indeed Dr Bull builds as much upon the 'μεγαλης βουλης αγγελος" of the Septuagint, as if it were the canonical language of Scripture, nor ever so much as hints at its being an *interpolation*. With more candour, Dr Waterland thinks, that it might have been a corruption of the Jews after our Saviour's time; and then adds, "it is "the less to be wondered at, if we meet with this "text but seldom cited, in proof of Christ's divinity, "since the LXX, which the primitive Fathers "chiefly followed, and quoted from, exhibited an-"other sense of the passage [2]."

[1] Isaiah lxiii. 9. [2] Serm. vi. p. 219.

LETTER XIII.

IT cannot, I think, be well denied, but that the Septuagint translation, as Dr Waterland has acknowledged, having been *chiefly* followed by the primitive Fathers, was the cause of the mistake into which they have fallen, on the subject of *angelic appearances*. And it is matter of strong probability, that their mistake, on this head, was greatly fortified by the doctrines of the *Jew Philo*, respecting the '*Logos*' and the '*angel*.' For, let the Doctors Bull and Allix, with the other admirers of Philo, say what they will, his notions respecting *Logos*, must be regarded as different from the notions of Scripture; being of a piece with the notions of his *predecessor*, if I may not call him his *master*, Plato. And, although Plato does confessedly speak much of a *Logos*, yet does he carefully place him at a great distance from the *supreme God*. The two Doctors above-named have quoted from the works of Philo, on this interesting subject. But even the passages, which they have quoted, are found to require the mollifying hand of the translator. Thus Dr Bull informs his readers, that Philo terms the Logos, "πρεσβυτατον, και γενικατατον των ὁσα γεγονε—*the oldest*

"*oldest and noblest of all creatures.*" The harshness however of these *superlative* epithets, the good Doctor is at no small pains to polish down, by rendering them, in the *comparative* degree, '*vetustiorem*,' &c.—'*older and nobler than the creatures*[1].' This, I am sorry to say, is no uncommon practice with Dr Bull. But, having used the same freedom with the same superlative term, when quoting from Origen, Mr Whiston, the advocate of Arianism, takes the Doctor roundly to task for it, and that upon grammatical grounds.

This '*πρεσβυτατος λογος*,' Philo calls, in one part of his works, '*οργανον Θεου*,' the *organ*, or *instrument* of God: in another part he terms him the "*arch-*"*angel*;" and introduces him, saying of himself—"*ουκ αγεννητος ως Θεος ων, ουτε γενητος ως υμεις—αλλα με-*"*σον των ακρων*—*I am not unbegotten as God is, nor* "*made as you are, but a middle between these ex-*"*tremes.*" Now, there is in Alexander of Alexandria's first letter against Arius, as recorded by Theodoret, a passage, which, if it is not borrowed from the above description, is similar, alas! too similar to it. The passage is as follows—"*αγνοουν-*"*τες 'οι ανασκητοι 'ως μακρον αν ειη μεταξυ πατρος αγεννητου,* "*και των κτισθεντων 'υπ 'αυτου εξ ουκ οντων, λογικων, και αλογων* "*'ων μεσιτευουσα Φυσις μονογενης, δι 'ης τα 'ολα εξ ουκ οντων* "*εποιησεν 'ο πατηρ, του Θεου λογου, 'η εξ αυτου του ογτος πατρος γε-*"*γεννηται*[2]." On this passage Whiston greedily lays hold;

[1] Def. S. 1. c. 1. § 17.

[2] Theodoret. Eccles. Hist. lib. 1. c. 4.

hold; and translates it, but in such an ungrammatical manner, as a critic, of his skill, has cause to be ashamed of.—'The unskilful are ignorant, how 'mighty a distance is between the unbegotten 'Father, and these rational and irrational creatures which were made by him out of nothing; 'between whom the only begotten is a middle nature, 'whereby the *Father of God the Word* made all 'things out of nothing, and which itself was begotten of the Father[1].'" The passage is quoted, and rendered thus into French by the Abbé Fleury—'Ne voyant pas la distance, qu'il y a entre le Pere 'non engendrè, et les creatures qu'il a fait de rien, 'au milieu de ces deux extremes est le fils unique le 'Dieu verbe (i. e. *in the middle of these two extremes is the only Son, the God word*) par qui le Pere a tout 'fait de rien, que le Pere a engendrè de lui meme[2].' It is also quoted, and translated thus into Latin, by Dr Bull—"Multum interesse inter patrem ingeni-'tum, et res ab illo creatas ex nihilo, tam ratio-'nales quam rationis expertes: Inter quæ duo, me-'dia interveniens unigenita natura Dei verbi (i. e. *between which two there intervenes in the middle, the only begotten nature of the God word*) per quam Pa-'ter universa condidit ex nihilo, ex ipso vero patre 'progenita est[3].'

Although none of these translations is quite literal, the points in which they differ may easily be perceived.

[1] Prim. Christ. vol. IV. p. 194.

[2] *Hist. Eccles.* liv. x. s. 30. [3] Def. Sect. III. c. 9. § 11.

ceived. Dr Bull attempts to soften the Arian aspect of the terms " μεσιτευουσα φυσις—*the middle na-*" ture," by a marginal note. But this very note affords matter of controversy ;—" Naturam sumit pro " persona; intelligit enim φυσιν εν υποστασει, ut paulo " ante locutus est Valesius in locum." Strange that neither Dr Bull, nor Valesius could have fallen upon some expression more consonant to the Scriptural use of the term ' μεσιτευουσα,' than the simple word ' *middle.*' Might it not have been rendered ' *mediatorial?*' This rendering would have been equally applicable to the description given in the passage at large, and would certainly have had a better effect in vindicating the orthodoxy of its original author. From the quotation however, as viewed by the controversialists of either party, it is sufficiently clear, that the Alexandrian Christians of those days, had their minds somewhat engrossed by the Platonic philosophy, as it had been adopted, and rendered more fit for their purpose, by their *Jewish* countryman Philo ; who, as he early obtained, so does he still retain no mean credit in the *Christian* world. Of this credit, besides the instances already adduced, we have sundry others equally well authenticated. Such is the introduction of the " cherubim and seraphim—angels " and archangels," into the worship of the true God [1]. And such is the arrogant conceit of the pseudo-Ignatius, who contends, that he was able to under-

[1] Constitutions Lit. B. 8. 13.

'understand the orders of angels, and the different 'sorts of archangels, and hosts, and powers, and 'dominions, the magnificence of the æons, the su-'pereminence of the cherubim and seraphim, the 'sublimity of the SPIRIT, the *kingdom* of the LORD, 'and above all, the incomparable majesty of Al-'mighty GOD'.' Here we have Philo's theology drawn to the life, and on a most complete scale of subordination—the *Spirit* above the cherubim; next to the Spirit—*the Lord*; and above all, ἐπὶ πᾶσι, *Almighty God.*

Of the same description is the elaborate system of ecclesiastical hierarchy, so long ascribed to the Areopagite, mentioned by St Paul. Nay, we ourselves are not wholly free of a tendency that way, while we still use the same language, "with *angels*, "and *archangels*," &c. Now, of *angels* we certainly do read in Scripture, be they who or what they will. But as to *archangels*, Scripture is wholly silent. We read, indeed, of *one* archangel, and only one, in the New Testament; and, from the many characters ascribed to him, he is thought, by learned writers not a few[z], to be no less a being than the Messiah himself: and who knows, but that 'arch-'angel' may be a title, given him in the New Testament, to correspond with the title מלאך יהוה—the *angel-Jehovah*—'the *angel of the covenant*,' 'the an-'gel of the presence,' &c. so often to be met with in

[z] Ignat. ad Trall. p. 5.

in the Old Testament. Notwithstanding all this, which cannot have wholly escaped the observation of the learned, the doctrine of '*angels*,' and even of '*archangels*,' continues, with *Philo's* attestation attached, to be interwoven in all systems of Divinity, which have obtained repute. To particularize only one— the system contained in "Dr Scott's "Christian Life," (a work of standard merit, and amply recommended) includes many archangels, and as distinctly assigns them their several offices, as if the author had had chapter and verse, to which he could refer the reader. Nay, what is truly strange, the Doctor tells us, that there was "a certain EXTRAORDINARY ANGEL, who frequent-"ly appeared, and spake to the Jewish Patriarchs, "and descended upon Mount Sinai, and from "thence removed into the tabernacle, and then "into the temple, and was *God the Son*[1]."— Now, not to object to this title, '*God the Son*,' on account of its being an expression not authorised by Scripture usage, during these appearances, I would only ask, Why this angel is called an *extraordinary* one? unless he be thus distinguished, for the purpose of implying that there was an *ordinary* class of angels, who, in general, were commissioned to appear? Dr Scott avows the implication; since he speaks of the mysterious '*wrestling*' of the patriarch Jacob[2] with a *man*, "supposing him, as it seems, to

s "have

[1] Scott's Christ. Life, part. II. ch. 7. § 8.

[2] Gen. xxxii. 24.

" have been an *ordinary* angel," though the supposition has no probability to support it, and as little countenance from the sacred historian. Besides, to me it appears extremely odd, to call the person, who, in the character of *angel*, '*frequently* appear-'ed, and spake to the Jewish Patriarchs,' &c. an '*extraordinary angel.*' But there may be a purpose to serve, by thus placing this '*extraordinary angel*' *first* on the list, yet *still on the list of ordinary* angels; as we say, that such a person was, or is, an *extraordinary man*, not meaning thereby, that the person was not, or is not *human*.

As Dr Scott proceeds, he becomes fuller, and more explicit, in his description of the angelic office. For, in pointing out those whom he calls, 'the ministers of the kingdom of Christ,' he ranks them thus, in a fourfold kind of order. " The first " and supreme minister, by which Christ rules his " kingdom, is *the Holy Ghost:* The second, and " *next* to him are the *angels of God:* The third are " *princes* and *civil governors:* The last are the " *bishops* and *pastors* of the church[1]." Now, although I mean not here to object to that novel scheme of ranking *princes*, in the ministration of Christ's kingdom, before *bishops*, who have been generally considered as *governors* of the church, *immediately* under Christ; and who, for the space of 300 years, had no *earthly prince* above them in that government,

[1] See Scott's Christ. Life, § X.

government, I must pause a little, for the purpose of enquiring, what idea we are to form of the *Holy Ghost,* from the learned Doctor's placing him in the above catalogue of the ministers of Christ's kingdom? Does it confirm our belief in him, as the object of our worship and adoration, that he is the *first minister* of the christian church? The apology which Dr Bull makes for some of the ancient Fathers, calling the Logos 'ὑπηρέτης,' the *minister* of the Father; viz. that it was 'κατ' οἰκονομιαν,' because of the assumed humanity, will not do here. In the case of 'the *Holy Ghost,*' there is no *humanity assumed*; nor will the œconomy of the divine covenant serve the Doctor's purpose. For he, and all such writers, speak of this covenant, as existing only between the *Father* and the *Son;* and in which the *Holy Ghost* is no party, further than what, in the following account of the person and quality of the Divine Spirit, the Doctor is pleased to make him: In the œconomy of the divine covenant, 'the Son agrees with the Father, that in case he 'would be so far reconciled to rebellious mankind, 'as to grant them a covenant of mercy, and therein, among other blessings, *to promise them his Holy* 'Spirit, he himself would assume our nature—upon 'which agreement, the Father granted his Spirit to 'mankind.' This degrading designation of the Spirit of Truth, Bishop Pearson expressly contradicts; for in the article, '*Of the Holy Ghost*[1],' he

 says,

[1] See his Exposition of the Creed.

says, 'When I speak of the office of the Holy 'Ghost, I do not understand any *ministerial* office or 'function, such as that of the *created angels* is, who 'are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for 'them who shall be heirs of salvation: For, I have 'already proved this Spirit to be a *person* properly '*divine*, and, consequently, *above* all MINISTRATION.' Leaving however this strange diversity of sentiment to be accounted for, by the friends of the Doctor and the Bishop, I proceed to examine what *ministry* it is, which Dr Scott ascribes to those angels, whom he ranks *next* in order to the Holy Ghost; and that, without any such compliment paid to the latter, as the words of the poet furnish—

"*Proximus* hüic, *longo* sed *proximus intervallo.*"

'One instance,' says the Doctor, 'of the ministry 'of angels in the kingdom of Christ is, their de-'claring, upon occasion, his mind, and will, to his 'church and people—for thus most of these *pro-'phetic* messages, which God, from time to time, 'sent to the world, were conveyed to the prophets 'by the ministry of angels.' In like manner, does Witsius talk, in a whole chapter of his Miscellanies, which stands entitled, 'De Revelatione 'per Angelos[a].' But neither of these gentlemen, when they come to particularize, can produce an instance other than that of *Daniel* and of *Zechariah*, after the captivity, 'of prophetic messages having been con-

[a] Miscel. Vol. I. l. 1. cap. 6.

'conveyed by the ministry of angels.' So far is Scripture from countenancing the belief of any such mode of conveyance, that it attributes most 'of these prophetic messages,' *not* to *created angels*, but *to the Holy Ghost*, of his own motion, and according to his own will[1]. To be sure St Paul makes use of some expressions, which seem to favour the Doctor's 'ministry of angels:' "The "law," says this apostle, "was *ordained by angels* "in the hand of a Mediator[2]." And again, if the "word spoken *by angels* was stedfast[3]." These are texts which would have been readily brought forward in support of the Doctor's plan, if he had not borne in mind, that '*created* angels' had no official ministration, in what St Paul more immediately alluded to. While the Apostle's applying the term *angels* to the ordination of the law, affords a sufficient key for opening up its meaning, in most other places where the word occurs. Especially, when it is recollected, that St Paul has corroborated, in some measure, this meaning of the term, in his quotation from the book of Psalms[4]—"who was "made a little lower than *the angels*." Here the Hebrew term is אלהים Aleim—*God;* which Arias Montanus has rendered '*a Deo*,' though the LXX have translated it '*αγγελους*,' *angels*. Are we then to

[1] See, inter alia, Acts xxviii. 25. 1 Cor. xii. 11. Heb. ii. 4 1 St. Peter i. 11. 2 St Peter i. 21.

[2] Gal. iii. 19. [3] Heb. ii. 2.

[4] Heb. ii. 7. 9. Ps. viii. 5.

to suppose that St Paul, in quoting the Septuagint version, was a stranger to the import of the original language, used by the Psalmist? or, are we not rather to believe, that his application of the Psalmist's language to Christ was meant, as conveying a description of the Redeemer of mankind, such as he had given in his Epistle to the Philippians[1]? For, that he could not mean to say, that Christ was made *lower* than *created angels*, is plain from what he had previously said of him, that he '*was made so much better than they*[2],' as well as from the whole tenor of his reasoning in the first chapter of the Hebrews. One thing I am convinced of, that St Paul would never, (as Dr Scott has unwarrantably done), have placed these '*ministring Spirits*' in the same scale with '*the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.*"

From what has been now advanced on this subject, it will, I hope, have appeared evident to the reader, that, in the scriptural style of the Old and New Testaments, there are two classes of *angels*, *created*, and shall I say, *uncreated*; or rather two classes, *real* and *assumed*. While, in the *former*, the Old Testament, it will be no easy matter to find out, when it is, that this *real* or *assumed* character of *angel* is meant to be understood. Did the context serve to affix the meaning to the '*created*' side, those who reason in this way might plead

[1] *Phil. ii. 6. 7.* [2] *Heb. i. 4.*

plead authority for their reasonings; but this the context seldom if ever does: and I cannot, for my own part, but be more and more confirmed in the opinion, which I long since formed, that this *doctrine of angels*, so incorporated with the modern tests of orthodoxy, and standing so high in the estimation of the Roman church, found its origin in the refinement of Plato's '*dæmons* and *middle gods*,' by the Jew Philo, who made Scripture-angels of them; until, by gradual transmission and embellishment, the doctrine has proceeded to uprear that fabric of *subordination in Deity*, of which the *defender of the Nicene faith* may be said to have afforded the chief corner-stone.

LETTER XIV.

THAT, in the preceding Letter, I have exposed myself to the reprehension of many learned divines, by having dared, not simply to dissent from writers of such eminence, but to animadvert on a system of theology, supposed to be founded on the authority

authority of the primitive Fathers, I am not insensible. Nay, I foresee, that I shall be charged with something little short of heresy, in having contradicted so many champions of the Faith, so many of those who have hitherto been held in high esteem among all denominations of Christians. To this heavy charge, I can, and I do plead, '*not guilty*;' being conscious of entertaining all due veneration for the character and writings of every one of that noble army of martyrs, whose works have reached the present period, and to whose works I have been fortunate enough to procure access. As, however, the volume of revealed truth is as open to me, as ever it was to them, and, as I am required to "search the Scriptures," whether the things "which others have declared concerning the Son of Man "be so," I dare not pin my faith, in such an essential article, to the creed of any man; be he *father*, or *doctor*—be he *martyr*, or *prelate*. I may, (for instance), and I do, *not merely reprobate*, but *abominate Whiston*, and the whole tribe of Arians, and Socinians, for their vilifying and contumelious treatment of Athanasius; yet have I no hesitation in owning, that I, individually, cannot go all the lengths, to which even some great men have gone, in almost superstitious attachment to him; nor can I, without scrupulous examination, embrace one tenet of his, merely because "ita loquitur magnus "Athanasius."

Athanasius was certainly a most illustrious character—

racter—no less distinguished for the support, which he lent to the catholic faith, than distinguished by his sufferings in its behalf. But of Athanasius' contemporaries, there were men equally illustrious, and equally distinguished, in the same cause, as the Nicene champion. One man, in particular, has long attracted my admiration, for his meek and peaceable retirement from the Patriarchate of Antioch, viz. Eustathius, whom the Arians, as they feared and hated him no less than they feared and hated Athanasius, so did they not fail to make equally the object of their calumny and persecution. Indeed, when I contra t the conduct of Eustathius, in regard to the See of Antioch, with Athanasius' repeated struggling and contention for the See of Alexandria, the former seems to me the more praise-worthy character of the two. For the trite panegyric, 'A-'thanasius *contra mundum*, et mundus *contra Athana-'sium*,' meets with none of my regard. And I cannot but express my surprize, that a system of theology, under the denomination of 'the Creed of St. Atha-'nasius,' should still find a place in the liturgy of the church. Admitting that this composition is the genuine composition of him, whose name it bears—what *single uninspired individual* is worthy of being held in such high authority, as that *his* system of faith should be put into the mouths of christians at large? But, when the weight of evidence *against* its authenticity preponderates so much; when *Vossius Usher, Quesnel, Pearson, Cave, Schelstrate, Pagi, Dupin, Fleury*, &c. are of opinion, that the com-

position belongs to a Latin writer, *Vigilius* by name, bishop of Thapsa in Africa, who lived one hundred years and more after Athanasius; it is strange indeed that no attempt has been made to correct the *title at least*, that, if we are still to retain the words of this creed, it may have some superior claim to our adoption, than what it now possesses.

By these observations I mean not to impress the reader with any thing unfavourable to the character of this active and skilful contender for the catholic faith. I esteem him as an acute and successful opponent of the creed of Arius; and *his* authority, as far as is due to *authority merely human*, I do readily and willingly admit; but let not Athanasius be held *as infallible*, or his *single* authority deemed sufficient to decide in points of faith, essential to the salvation of man. In establishing my belief in Jesus Christ, "*My Lord, and my God*," let me be allowed to respect the language of 'the Holy Martyr, *Ignatius*,' as much as the language of 'the great confessor *Athanasius*;' and more I ask not, since, if I find a difference of sentiment between the two writers, I feel myself compelled to give the preference, where it is confessedly due, to the writer of the greatest antiquity. Indeed the truth seems to be, that although the Fathers of the Christian church may have been "all of one mind," on the subject of a Trinity in unity; yet, when they come to a particular explanation, and description of this 'mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,' they

they are found to express themselves in terms so very different, and so ill adapted to modern language, that to reconcile their expressions to *our* ideas, or even to the ideas of each other, must be a matter of *force*; instances of which the reader has already been put in possession of. Nay, it not unfrequently happens, that the same Father uses, in different works, and with different intentions, the same word, in different senses. Thus, among numerous instances, we have Tertullian, in his work against Praxeas, affirming that the Persons in Deity are "tres, non statu, sed *gradu*;" while, in his work against Hermogenes, he affirms expressly "divinitas *non gradum* habet, utpote uni-"ca." Certainly both cannot be true in the same sense; therefore the word *gradus* must have been understood by Tertullian in different senses.

But, as "the testimony of the Fathers" is held to be of such weight in the scale of controversy, and is always resorted to, in bar of any attempt to innovate on what is deemed "*standard doctrine*," I mean to offer, for the edification of the theological student, two observations, which he will do well to bear in mind, when such testimony is presented to his view.

1. It will not be denied, that, in explication of Scripture, some parts of which are "hard to be "understood," even the Fathers were liable to mistake. For this opinion, I can produce no

meaner authority than that of Archbishop Laud, whose admiration, and imitation of the Fathers of the Christian church, cannot be questioned. This venerable prelate asserts, that 'the current exposition of writers is a strong, probable, argument 'for the sense of an article or canon of the church, 'yet but probable: the current exposition of the 'Fathers themselves has *sometimes missed the sense* '*of the church*'.' The Fathers were doubtless the worthiest of *men*—but still *men* they were: *men* of like passions, and with like infirmities as others of the same species. They were, to use Archbishop Laud's words, 'extra concilium,' *not infallible*; and to infallibility they never so much as pretended.

I am willing to admit, in all its force, the doctrine of the 'charismata,' or *gifts*. But, let it be always remembered, that long prior to the æra of an Athanasius, &c. those *charismata*, (allowing that they had been generally dispensed), had ceased to be dispensed. Therefore against the supposed possibility of mistake, no argument can be drawn from them. Nor is it in any respect derogatory to the testimony of the Fathers, as witnesses of *fact*, that we do not give them implicit credit as arbiters of *faith*. Not however to dwell longer on a subject, which may be thought injurious to the memory of martyrs and confessors, and, in itself, of dangerous admission in a youthful mind, I hasten to offer my

IId

[1] See Heylin's Life of Laud, p. 181.

IId observation, to which, I trust, that neither reason nor modesty will object. It is possible, that *we* ourselves may, at this distant period, mistake and '*miss the sense of the Fathers*:' more especially the sense of the Grecian Fathers, who were the earliest, and for a long time, the most numerous class of christian writers.

The original language of one division of the Holy Bible was the Greek language; and, for many years, the only version of the other division was also written in the Greek tongue. Although however this language, during the respective æras of the Septuagint translators, and of the Apostles and Evangelists, was vernacular to the most conspicuous body of christians, yet to us the Greek language has long been a dead language, the knowledge of which can be acquired only by laborious study. Had the writings of these venerable worthies been drawn up in modern English, the argument from their authority, upon which so much stress is laid, would have been, in a great measure, irresistible. But, as matters are with us, to understand the Fathers requires the same labour and application which are requisite to the understanding of the Scriptures themselves. Both must be examined and studied, with equal industry and attention, before we can apprehend the sense of the writer; and it will be found, upon trial, as easy to interpret the one as the other.

It being therefore the result of our own daily experience, that the language of the Fathers is as foreign, and difficult of apprehension as is the language of Scripture; and, in no respect, intelligible to us, without previous erudition, and painful investigation, two questions arise, (though questions which involve their own answers), Whether the *Scriptures*, or the *writings of the primitive Fathers*, ought to supply us with the articles of our faith? and, as the language of both stands to us in the same predicament, Which of them is to form the test, by which we are to discover the sense of the other?

I need not enlarge on these topics, nor detain the reader, by entering on a fuller discussion of them. I shall merely add, that the observations now briefly submitted to his notice, are, in my estimation, worthy of more devout regard, than what hitherto, I fear, has been bestowed upon the subject matter of them. I am completely aware, that the latter observation may be turned against myself, and against the weak attempt which it is the purpose of these letters to make, to rescue the young and inexperienced candidate for the ministry, from the trammels of a system of theology, to which alone the palm of orthodoxy has been, for ages, awarded. And I fully expect to be told by some flippant critic, that the eminent 'masters in Israel,' from whose system I am foolhardy enough to dissent, were men of skill and talent, so superior to their humble opponent, and possessed of a knowledge of

of the languages of antiquity, so eminently transcending all that I possess, that my arrogance and presumption, in supposing them ignorant of the truth, the whole truth, as it is in Jesus, ought to render me, and my arguments unworthy of the least regard. So far, however, am I from combating such a charge, that I acknowledge myself worthy of having it preferred against me, in all its force. The charge, I shall only take the liberty of saying, being personal, bears, in no one respect, against the merits of the cause at issue. It is fairly presumeable, that every man is best acquainted with the extent of his own discernment, as well as with what constitutes the extent to which his sense of public duty ought to carry him. It is from a serious consideration of both, that I feel myself called upon to exert what abilities God hath given me, in an honest and earnest inquiry after his revealed truth; and since the sacred Scriptures are to be considered as the fountain of that knowledge which alone maketh wise unto salvation, it is from this *fountain*, I am not ashamed to say, that I have always had a greater desire to draw the '*water*' of life eternal, than from any *streams* which have ever flowed from it. In every such case, there is risk of some heterogeneous mixture, being imbibed in the purest human channel—which risk, I hesitate not to say, the life-giving doctrine of the Deity of our Redeemer, has actually incurred in its passage through the channel, by which it ought to have been transmitted pure and sound to us. Prejudice, even in the

abstract,

abstract, is an obnoxious term; yet am I not ashamed to own myself *prejudiced* in favour of the *written* word of God. Indeed I cannot well conceive how any person can attempt an examination of scriptural truth, without feeling something more or less akin to what is termed, *prejudice in its favour*, or *prejudice against it*. The man, who was a total stranger to the inspired volume, would naturally be *prejudiced* on the side of scepticism and infidelity; while no one who has been blessed with a knowledge of the things therein contained, can divest himself wholly of attachment to it. Thus —a Paine and a Priestley would be *prejudiced against it*—a Horne and a Horsley would be *prejudiced for it*.

LETTER XV.

HAVING in the conclusion of the preceding Letter made an open avowal of the motives, and attachments, by which I feel myself actuated, and with which, I trust, that it is impossible any real

real christian can or will find fault, I proceed now to lay before the discerning reader the information which, as I think, the Scriptures of truth afford, on this great and fundamental article of both faith and duty, under our immediate consideration. There is, however, one preliminary position necessary to be laid down, as of first-rate importance in every enquiry of this kind, and consonant, I am convinced, with the sentiments of every true friend of revelation. The position is this—that, as soon as the Creator was pleased to enter into any sort of intercourse, or communication with man, he would notify himself to this favourite creature, by some particular *name*, or *designation*, which might discover to human conceptions, in their primary and unimpaired state, the nature and essence of that supreme Being, as in himself considered, and under the relation, in which he had vouchsafed to place himself with regard to man. This we know to be necessary in all mutual intercourse, which can neither be begun nor carried on without such antecedent notification, to require which, would seem to be the consequence of a natural instinct in, or original impression upon, the human mind. This plainly appears from what occurred, when Moses was about to receive his commission to bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt—for "Moses said unto God[1], "Behold, when I come to the children of Israel,

 "and

[1] Exod. iii. 13. 14.

" and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers " hath sent me unto you, and they shall say, *What* " *is his name?* what shall I say unto them?"

Now this requisition made by Moses, I may safely affirm, has been fully complied with; as it is well known, that the earliest revelation of the Divine will and œconomy, which the Bible contains, presents us with two words, or names, strongly significant in themselves, and completely expressive of what I may, with no impropriety, call, both the *intrinsic* nature, and voluntarily *assumed* relation of that great Almighty Being, in whom we believe, and upon whom we depend. These two emphatical words, in the primæval language of divine revelation, are "יהוה" and "אלהים," "JEHOVAH" and "ALEIM;" the one, "*Jehovah*," a word in the *singular* number, denoting the *self-existence*, or rather the *self-essence* of Deity: the other, "*Aleim*," a word in the *plural* number, denoting the *relation*, in which he has been pleased to reveal himself to man.

In the Greek language, these two words '*Jehovah*' and '*Aleim*,' are rendered by the terms 'Κύριος' and 'Θεός.' In the Latin language, they are rendered by the terms 'DOMINUS' and 'DEUS;' and in the English language, by the terms 'LORD' and 'GOD.' I must however be permitted to say, that in all these languages, the terms substituted for the Hebrew original, do by no means express the

the sense of that original; and have therefore been, in a great measure, productive of all the confusion and inconsistency, so visible in the far greater part of those theological disquisitions, which exist at this day.

The word 'JEHOVAH,' for which, during so many ages, the Jews have shewn such a superstitious degree of reverence, that they will not even pronounce it, is acknowledged to be the *proper* name of the "SUPREME BEING:" "Thou, whose *name alone* is "JEHOVAH," said the Psalmist, "art the most high "over all the earth[1]." Indeed it is a word which seems to have been designedly *framed* by the *Most High* himself, for that very purpose, and with a restrictive view to himself *alone*. Thus, in its formation, and in the use, to which it is invariably applied, the word '*Jehovah*' possesses a number of singularities, which belong to no other word whatever in the Hebrew language. It neither forms, nor can form a plural. It admits of no syntactic alliance with the pronouns possessive '*my*,' '*thy*,' '*our*,' '*their*,' &c. It is never used *in regimine*, that is, governing the genitive case, as *Jehovah* of heaven, of earth, of Jacob, &c. In short, it is a word so peculiar in its formation, and so exclusive in its construction and application, that I have long thought that it should never have been translated; or, at least,

[1] Psal. lxxxiii. 18.

that it never should have been translated by the *Greek*, *Latin*, and *English* terms above mentioned; all of which, in the sense which we are taught to ascribe to them, have no relation to the word itself, nor connection with what it confessedly implies. Certainly of the three, the Greek term 'Κυριος' approaches the nearest to the true sense of the original; being in all probability derived from the old verb 'κυρω' signifying '*sum*,' 'existo,' *to be, to exist*. This Bishop Pearson has endeavoured to shew, in his admirable criticism on that part of the Apostles' creed—" and in Jesus Christ, *our Lord*."— Yet it is a question with him, whether later writers had that *derived* signification in their eye, when they used the term 'κυριος.'

If however the word '*Jehovah*' required translation into the Greek language, that language afforded a more unequivocal mode of rendering it, which the Septuagint translators adopted, when they arrived at the remarkable injunction given unto Moses. And God said, " Thus shalt thou say " unto the children of Israel, '*I am*' hath sent me " unto you [1]." The words of the Septuagint are " Ὁ " ΩΝ ἀπεσταλκε με " completely agreeable to what our blessed Saviour declared respecting himself— " before Abraham was, 'ΕΓΩ ΕΙΜΙ,' *I am* [2]." And no less agreeable to the language of his Evangelist St.

[1] Exod. iii. 14. [2] St John viii. 58.

St John, when addressing the seven churches in Asia; "Grace be unto you and peace, 'απο του 'Ο "ΩΝ,' from *Him, which is*[1]," &c.

It is so evident, therefore, as to be beyond the reach of controversy, that the true, and real, and radical import of the sacred name JEHOVAH is '*be-ing*,' '*existing*;' or, in scholastic style, '*The Be-ing who is a seipso, self-existent*'—a term, of which we can form none other but a *negative* conception; i. e. a conception, which *includes* nothing, but which *excludes* all idea of *derived*, or *communicated existence*; those artful quibbles of modern invention, which, while equally inconceivable with '*existence*' in the abstract, have led to most dangerous and most unscriptural consequences.

The other word, 'ALEIM,' applied to Deity, in the original language of Scripture, is not like 'JEHOVAH,' but is of common construction, and of most extensive application. By all the rules of grammar, it is a word in the plural number, and in the active form[2]. With respect to its derivation, some would have the word '*Aleim*' to be derived from a root, preserved, they say, in the Arabic tongue,

[1] Revel. i. 4.—Perhaps the neuter το ων of Plato, which he ascribes to the supreme God, may have been borrowed from the 'ο ων of the 70.

[2] Yet have I seen attempts made (which cannot be too severely reprobated) to make the word *Aleim* passive, by inserting the ו, which denotes the passive voice in Hebrew, and reading it *Alueim*, although the Scripture denounces an anathema against such freedoms.

tongue, '*Alaha*,' which, we are told, signifies '*to* '*worship*.' But finding the active sense of '*worship*-'*ping*' to be incompatible with the inflexible import of the other word '*Jehovah*,' such etymologists are forced to wrest it into the *passive* participle '*adorandus*,' viz. '*the, Being that ought to be* '*worshipped*.' Still however the plural termination stands in opposition to their scheme of derivation; and will continue to oppose it, in the eye of every impartial biblical scholar, notwithstanding all that has been, or can be said to the contrary. For to him it must be evident, that, in the whole sacred vocabulary there is not a word to be found which more readily and naturally, and without the least display of grammatical skill, points out its own derivation, than this very word 'ALEIM.' Thus, remove the plural adjunct 'ים,' and there remains the word 'אלה,—*Alc*,' a word which frequently occurs in all its deflections, both of noun and verb. The context of the passages where it occurs, and the sense put upon it by the Hebrew lexicographers, denote its meaning, *as a verb*, to be, '*I swear*;' and *as a noun*, to be '*an oath*,' attended by the invocation of '*a curse*.' Now these are meanings of the 'אלה' singular, which, notwithstanding any apparent harshness of sound, those who are willing to apprehend the Christian scheme, in its full extent, can find no difficulty in reconciling to that mysterious dispensation; but, on the contrary, will see it beautifully illustrating that merciful scheme, as comprehended in, and delineated by, this gracious title

'*Aleim*,'

'*Aleim*,' in the radical latitude of its original construction.

I shall not, at present, enter into an enlarged discussion of this important subject, which has already afforded matter of much learned controversy; particularly between the well known Hebrew lexicographer, Mr Julius Bate, who espoused the derivation of the word '*Aleim*' from the Hebrew '*Ale*,' and Archdeacon Sharp of Northumberland, who keenly maintained its derivation from the Arabic '*Allaha*.' In this etymological contest the reader is left to decide for himself, according as he enters into the different views of the two combatants; that is, whether he is desirous to prove, with Mr Bate, the *certainty* of something thought to be *uncertain*; or wishes, with Dr Sharp, to argue for an *uncertainty*, in a matter which every friend of true and undefiled religion, must, if actuated by consistency, be anxious to find *certain*. One thing, I should think, will be freely granted by the oriental scholar, and it is all which I shall at present solicit of him, viz. that the Hebrew term 'ALEIM' is not a name *descriptive* of Deity, but only an adjunct noun, expressive of *relation*, both *internal* and *extrinsic*, to which the plural number, being so uniformly attached, does reasonably indicate a plurality in *Jehovah*; while the demonstrably active formation of the term denotes *action* or *agency* of some sort or other, to be the property of this plurality.

It has happened, and it may happen still, that a translation of the word '*Aleim*,' into the English language, by the epithets, '*swearers*,' '*engagers by* '*oath or curse*,' shall be disputed, although it be unquestionably conformable to the sense of the root '*Ale*,' and although it would express what I have called the *internal* or *essential relation* comprehended in the Hebrew original. But let it only be conceded, that the word '*Aleim*,' by which Jehovah is designated, in the original scriptures of the Old Testament, is meant to express *some* 'relation,' 'action,' or 'agency,' friendly and beneficial to man, and my present purpose will be served. For it follows, to the conviction of the meanest capacity, that nothing of this sort, neither *relation*, nor *action*, nor *agency*, is included in the English term 'GOD,' which we have substituted for the Hebrew term 'ALEIM,' and to which we have very improperly and perversely affixed the idea of '*Essence*,' which exclusively belongs to the name 'JEHOVAH;' while, on the other hand, we have rendered the name '*Jehovah*,' by the English term 'LORD,' which with us is a term of relation, conveying indeed an idea of superior dignity and authority; but infinitely short of what is conveyed by the peculiar and incommunicable import of the truly divine appellation 'JEHOVAH.'

It is however this *reversed* use of the two original scriptural designations of Deity, *Jehovah* and *Aleim*, which, running through all the modern languages

guages of which I have any competent knowledge, has not failed to affect our conceptions of that great incomprehensible Being, to whom the sincere christian is taught to look up for comfort and support, in every act of adoration and obedience. Whereas, this comfortable aspect would have been presented to our thoughts in a much more obvious and striking manner, if the significant distinction between the Hebrew words, 'JEHOVAH,' 'ALEIM,' had been, or could have been, retained in our language. Nay matters might still be a little remedied, if this distinction could only be infused into our use, and application of our devotional terms "LORD GOD," which, I have reason to fear, are looked upon as wholly synonimous, and of the same import.

It is indeed by a promiscuous use and acceptation of these terms, to which the defective nature of the English language does, in some respect, subject us, that we lose so much, if not all the energy of precept, and influence of motive, which characterized the faith and practice of the old believers, and which they evidently beheld and recognized in the appellations, which they were accustomed to bestow on the great and gracious object of their worship. Thus, for instance, in the Mosaic precept[1], which our Saviour has sanctioned with the title of the '*first* and *great* commandment,' "Thou "shalt love—יהוה אלהיך, *Jehovah Aleika*—the LORD

[1] Deut. vi. 5.

"thy GOD,' it would immediately occur to the then *faithful*, from the distinctive qualities of this twofold name, what *reason* or *motive* they had for loving Jehovah, this supreme Being—not because of his *Essence*, or infinite perfections, which were the same to all nations, and above human contemplation; but because he was "*Aleim*," to his own peculiar people, because he possessed some quality which applied immediately to them, some relation which, of whatever character, or of whatever extent, called for, and could not fail to excite, their love. Thus again, in the rapturous exclamation of the Psalmist—"I trusted in thee. *Jehovah*, "I said, Thou art my *Aleim*[1]," and in that other passage of the same author, still more extensive—"Blessed are the people whose *Aleim* is *Jehovah*," or "who have *Jehovah* for their *Aleim*[2], it is visible that the whole emphasis of the Psalmist's language rests on the *relative* sense of the appellation '*Aleim*,' and excites in the mind a conception of *somewhat or other*; some *peculiarity*, which however is not only obscured, but lost sight of altogether in the English version—"Blessed are the people, whose "*God* is Jehovah,," or "who have Jehovah for "their *God*." But the matter is so plain, as to require no further proof; in which case, it is left to the meditation of the biblical student; and I shall merely recommend to him this original and important distinction between the terms '*Aleim*' and '*Je-*

[1] Psalm xxxi. 14. [2] Ps. cxliv. 15.

'*Jehovah*,' as an useful key for opening up the particular import, and illustrating the meaning of many passages in the Old Testament, where these words '*Jehovah Aleim*,' 'LORD GOD,' occur. For without such a key, they may be found in *apposition* with each other, or in *juxtaposition* to each other, and yet be carelessly slurred over, as *mere words of course*, or, at the utmost, be regarded as a flourish of Eastern tautology; instances of which are so numerous, that I need not detain the reader with pointing them out.

Nor is this all; for, I am firmly persuaded, that the distinction, for which I am now contending, would be of the greatest use in overcoming, if not in preventing the hurtful effects of those intricate subtleties, and metaphysical wrangling, which have so long involved the *fundamental doctrine* of christianity—a TRINITY IN UNITY; and which, by being so much indulged in, have perplexed the sound and orthodox christian beyond what can well be imagined.

LETTER XVI.

HAVING expressed my firm persuasion, that the original and important distinction between the terms '*Aleim*' and '*Jehovah*,' would be of great use in preventing the effects of much perplexing subtlety of expression, and metaphysical wrangling, which have taken place, on the subject before us; it is proper that I should proceed to adduce something, beyond a mere speculative opinion, on this head. I shall therefore select, as the datum on which my opinion is founded, the following matter from the writings of the much applauded Dr Samuel Clarke. This author tells us, that "the "word '*God*,' in scripture, is never intended to ex- "press philosophically his abstract metaphysical at- "tributes, but to raise, in us, a notion of his attri- "butes *relative* to us, his supreme dominion, autho- "rity, power, justice, goodness[1], &c. And again, he says, "The word, 'Θεὸς—*God*,' has, in Scrip- "ture, and in all books of morality, and religion, "a *relative* signification, and not, as in metaphysi- "cal

[1] See "Script. Doctrine," p. 296.

" cal books, an absolute one: as is evident from the " relative terms, which, in moral writings, may be " joined with it, as we say, ' My God,' &c. But " metaphysically we cannot say, ' My infinite sub- " stance[1]," &c.

Had this acute sophist known, (as I have no certainty whether he did know or not), or, if he had known, had he attended (as I am certain he has *not* attended) to the obvious meaning of the Hebrew titles ' ALEIM ' and ' JEHOVAH,' there had been both *sense* and *truth* in what these quotations from his works contain. But, upon the plan which he has assumed, there is neither *sense*, nor *truth*, in them. Constituting however, as they do, the groundwork of all Dr Clarke's theological sophistry, we are furnished, by their means, with a powerful argument for the *distinction*, which ought to exist, and which ought to have, at all times, existed, between the original designations of Deity. Instead of marking this distinction, Dr Clarke has confounded them together; and substituted in their room, the unmeaning word ' God ;' and thereby, contrary to every rule of sound logic, has obscured the conceptions, which revelation would otherwise have furnished, of the Supreme Being.

It has been objected, and, in my opinion, justly objected to Dr Clarke, that, in his elaborate work en-

[1] See Reply to Bishop Gastrell, p. 284.

entitled "*The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*," he has taken little, or no notice of the Hebrew Scriptures. This, whatever his admirers may think of the Doctor's performance, betrays it to be glaringly deficient, and its author to have palpably departed from the extensive field of research into which the specious title, given to the work, does confessedly furnish the reader with an expectation of being introduced. Nor is such conduct attributable only to Dr Clarke: it is too common with most writers on the subject of the '*Holy Trinity*,' either wholly to neglect, or to lay but small stress upon, the evidence of the *Old Testament*. This they do from a sadly erroneous supposition, that the Old Testament affords but few authorities for the belief of such a doctrine. Yet, by means of this supposition those writers are frequently led into visible inconsistencies, not to say, self-contradiction. Of this we have a striking instance in the case of a Sermon writer, named Bedford, who very gravely presents us with this perplexed account of things—"The doctrine of the Trinity was *clearly* "*intimated* in *many places of the Old Testament*—it "was recorded in the two great libraries erected "in Noah's time[1]. It was but *obscurely mentioned* "*by Moses and the prophets*—yet it was the belief of "the Jews for some centuries before Christ," &c.

Was

[1] See 'Sermons of Mr Bedford,' p. 100.—In page 94. he had informed his reader, "that this was done by Thoth, the grandson of "Ham, the one at Berytus in Asia, the other at Alexandria in Egypt.

Was this indeed a subject within the province of man's finite reason, it might then be *reasonably* presumed, that the Almighty Being, who delights so much in denominating himself "JEHOVAH, the "ALEIM of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," would explain to *them*, and that to the full extent of their mental powers, what the term '*Jehovah*' meant, and what it was to be '*Aleim*' to them — "*their Aleim.*" We learn, from undoubted authority, that one of these three eminent patriarchs "rejoiced to see the day of the Messiah—and he "saw it and was glad[1]." HE who declared this to the boastful children of righteous Abraham, is acknowledged by all, who admit of a Trinity in the Godhead, to belong to that Trinity. While it would be, to be 'wise above what is written,' in any man, to limit the '*sight*' vouchsafed the highly favoured patriarch, to what is called the '*eye of faith.*' On the contrary, we are sure that *Abraham saw* the object, *represented* to have been seen by him, with his *bodily eyes;* whether in the *single* person of '*Melchisedec,*' as St Paul seems to indicate[2], or in the *conjunct* appearance of the three אנשים—*men, persons standing by*[3]—but by whom? Not, as is commonly and hastily thought, '*by Abraham*' himself; 'for he ran from the tent-door to meet them' —but 'standing by the *appearance of Jehovah.*' This is certainly the import of the narrative, were it left to

[1] St John viii. 56. [2] Heb. vii.

[3] Gen. xviii.

to its own grammatical construction for a meaning; —'Jehovah appeared, and three persons stood עליו, 'Oliu—*by, on,* or *above* the appearance.'

The highly distinguished son of Terah had been blest with appearances or exhibitions of Jehovah before this period[1]. He would therefore immediately recognize, upon every renewal, *such* as were habitual to him. But here it is a new exhibition with which he is favoured. The *appearance* consists of *three;* and *these three,* Abraham sometimes addresses in the plural number, as *three;* sometimes, in the singular number, as *one:* which circumstance may have given rise to the trite, but most expressive sentiment of St Augustine, (if my memory serves me), 'Tres vidit, et unum adoravit,' '*He saw the Trinity, and worshipped the Unity.*'

Were it not, that I am afraid of expressing myself improperly on so awful a theme, I might hazard a conjecture, (for I shall call it no more), regarding the ONE in JEHOVAH, before *whom* Abraham stood[2], 'when the men turned their faces 'from thence, and went towards Sodom:'—and *whom,* in the very introduction to his earnest expostulation, the patriarch calls 'The Judge of all 'the earth[3],' explained by what is said in St. John's Gospel, that 'the Father judgeth no man, 'but committeth all judgement unto the Son.' Yet

[1] Gen. xii. 7. and xvii. 1. [2] Gen. xviii. 22.
[3] verse 25. and John v. 22.

Yet, although this conjecture, if admissible, might perhaps lead to a new interpretation of the mysterious transactions recorded in the following chapter[1], I am restrained from launching too far, for fear of going beyond my depth; but one observation I am warranted to make, by what is actually 'written for our learning,' that, at this particular time, Abraham *saw*, and held a conference with, '*Jehovah in Trinity.*' By this same Jehovah no intimation is given, and by the patriarch, no sentiment is expressed, which has the most distant tendency to convey an idea of any *subordination* or *inferiority* in the שלשה, or *persons*, who thus exhibited themselves. We read of no 'generation,' of no 'procession,' of no 'fountainship,' &c. so much insisted on now-a-days; but all the *three*, we learn from Abraham's indiscriminate reception of them, appeared to be *co-equal*, *co-ordinate*, *consubstantial*, and thus *constituent* of ONE JEHOVAH.

No wonder that the venerable Abraham, 'the 'father of the faithful,' should rejoice in such a gracious and *familiar* manifestation of the true God, which did so far surpass any *revelation*, in the common acceptation of the word, and which would not fail to stamp an impression on the good man's mind, of which no other individual can form an adequate idea. Indeed, from the character which Jehovah himself gives of the venerable patriarch—

[1] Gen. xix. particularly v. 13. 24.

'For *I know* him, that he will command his chil-'dren, and his household after him, and they shall 'keep[1],' &c. we cannot do otherwise than conclude, that the wonderfully descriptive exhibition, with which he was honoured, would form a prominent part in the instructions and *commandments*, which he would impart to his children, particularly to his son *Isaac*, whose unexpected, and well nigh *incredible* birth, the same *Jehovah*, whose *appearance* consisted in *three* אנשים, did, at this very period, announce.

What notifications of this sort may have preceded the above appearance, and have been vouchsafed to *Seth*, to *Enoch*, to *Noah*, to *Shem*, &c. as they are not particularly recorded, so they cannot be brought into argument. And, after the treatment which a *Bate*, a *Parkhurst*, and a *Jones*, have received from the self-designed arbiters of theological truth, I may be thought more than bold enough to meddle with the *cherubic* figure, originally displayed 'at the east of the garden of Eden;' afterwards set up, by express command, in the tabernacle and temple; then minutely described by the prophet Ezekiel; and finally alluded to by the author of the Apocalypse. Notwithstanding all which, this mysterious figure is, without any ceremony, debased, by men of sound judgment, into something even below the hieroglyphics of the heathen—

The

[1] Gen. xviii. 19.

The cherubim, according to received systems, being merely *two angels*, with *one* sword between them, to prevent our first parents from breaking into the sacred garden; and its after introduction into the tabernacle and temple being for no other purpose than that of decorating the *holy place*. Yet, as no proof has ever been attempted, in vindication of this, the current belief, any one is at liberty to behold the cherubic emblem with that eye of faith for which so majestic a display would seem to have been designed; and to view it with sentiments some way corresponding to the sentiments of St Paul, who hesitates not to call this interesting figure the 'cherubim of glory[1].' If therefore what has been spitefully termed the *Hutchinsonian* account of this cherubic glory, so wonderfully exhibited to God's faithful worshippers of old, could be admitted, (and there has not one *solid argument* yet been adduced in contradiction of it), then, according to the ancient maxim, 'verum quod prius, 'falsum quod posterius,' it would follow that Aaron's imitative error lay chiefly in what I hope to be pardoned for calling 'the *Unitarianism* of it;' and that his '*golden calf*' was not, as has been with much parade held forth, borrowed from the *Egyptian Apis*, but was really and truly the *original* of that idol; since, prior to the æra of the Exodus, there is not the least authentic vestige of Apis in the Egyptian mythology.

[1] Heb. ix. 5.

But let what has been said of the cherubim have what weight it may, there is one conclusion which, from the contents of this Letter, I may safely draw, that the visible manifestation of the *Three in Jehovah*, which was vouchsafed to Abraham, would continue to be held in sacred and devout remembrance by his numerous posterity; and that, in consequence, *upon it*, as sufficient evidence of the fact of a Triune existence in Deity, Moses would be directed to frame the most ancient, and most authoritative creed ever promulgated in the world—"Hear, O Israel, JEHOVAH our ALEIM is ONE JE-"HOVAH[1]." Nay, I shall refer the matter to any unprejudiced enquirer into the fundamental articles of christianity, whether in the promiscuous use of the two English words 'LORD' and 'GOD,' and under the sense assigned to the latter, as the most significant of the two, there appears that strength of emphasis, or even that propriety of expression which one would have expected from the solemn appeal, with which the declaration is introduced; and which is not only radically inherent in the Hebrew words 'JEHOVAH' and 'ALEIM,' but inseparable from them, when their meaning is duly considered.

[1] Deut. vi. 4.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

BY what I have advanced in the foregoing pages, on the subject of the Holy Trinity, it is not to be supposed, that the object in view is a systematic defence of this, the primary article of the christian faith. My object is simply to correct a growing error, with regard to this point, viz. *That the scriptures of the Old Testament are at best but dark and obscure respecting it;* although we are assured, on no less authority than that of our Saviour himself, that the Jews *thought* (and who dares say that they were not authorised to *think?*) that, in the scriptures of the Old Testament, "*they had eternal life*[1]." But having *eternal life* implies having the *revelation of a Trinity in Unity;* since *no christian* requires to be informed, that *eternal life* is unattainable by fallen man, without a firm belief of that fundamental article.

I know how common it is to say, that the *New* Testament alone affords clear and express evidence of a Trinity in Unity; by reason that the New Testa-

[1] St John v. 39.

Testament alone asserts, 'that the *Three* which bear 'record in Heaven are *One*'.' But does not Moses speak also of a '*Three* who are *One*' having been seen and conversed with on earth? To me this appears to be a proof equally clear and convincing as is the New Testament decision. I shall no doubt be told, that many of the Fathers, of the schoolmen, and of modern divines, do interpret the history to which I allude, in a manner subversive of the fabric which it has been my endeavour to raise upon it. My reply is, that the same liberties have been taken with the text of St John, which exhibits so clearly and expressly the *New* Testament evidence. Nay, it is sufficiently known, that this text has been boldly rejected altogether; and I hesitate not to say, with as much shew of plausibility on the one side, as the *appearance* made to Abraham has been misinterpreted on the other, that is, with no great solidity of argument on either side. I repeat it, however, that a systematic defence of the doctrine of the Trinity is not my object at present. It has merely fallen to be discussed in the course of argument, on a subject intimately connected with it—the *unsubordinate Deity* of Christ Jesus. Of this, I must take leave to affirm, that we are furnished with one incontestible proof, arising from this obvious circumstance, that the Messias is so eminently *held forth*, *born witness to*, and *distinctly spoken of*, through the whole of the Hebrew scriptures,

[1] St John v. 7.

tures, from Moses to Malachi, without any allusion whatever to '*generation*,' '*filiation*,' '*Sonship*,' &c.

But besides the two words, "JEHOVAH," "A-" LEIM," "LORD," "GOD," applicable, as I have shewn, to the Trinity in general, it is proper that I direct your attention to other two words, likewise rendered 'LORD,' and 'GOD;' which words are applied *restrictively*, I had almost said, *exclusively*, to him, in whom, (as the great author of the vocation wherewith they are called), christians will always rejoice and say, "Thou art the King of glo-" ry, O Christ." The first of these remarkable words is '*Adon*,' or '*Adoni*;' which is translated 'κυριος,' '*Dominus*,' '*Lord*.' To the latin '*dominus*,' '*Lord*,' as implying '*dominion*,' '*lordship*,' '*authority*,' &c. the word '*Adoni*,' in its true and radical sense, has a marked affinity. But this is a sense wholly foreign to the radical import of the word 'JEHOVAH,' with which it is frequently joined, and with a kind of emphasis, by the prophet Ezekiel—"ADONI, "JEHOVAH, *the Lord God*[1]." This is a striking peculiarity in that mystical writer, which to the Jews, who always, in reading the Scriptures, substitute '*Adonai*' for '*Jehovah*,' has proved a real stumbling block. For, whether to pronounce the words of Ezekiel,

[1] The same expression occurs in many parts of the Old Testament. But no where is the inaccuracy of the English more marked, than in Exodus xxxiv. 23. את־פני יהוה יהיה אלהי ישראל, being translated "before the face of the Lord God, the God of Israel."

EDITOR.

Ezekiel, '*Adonai Elohim*,' or '*Elohim Adonai*,' they know not. Even our translators have, in this passage, and in many others, been forced to render 'JEHOVAH' by the word 'GOD,' contrary to their common practice. The Septuagint, however, have retained their usual vocable, and have rendered Ezekiel's words 'κυριος, κυριος,' '*Lord, Lord*[1]."

Now that this word '*Adoni*,' although, from its formation, found applicable to others, is yet particularly applicable to Christ, in his compound character, as the 'συνθετον τι' (to use Origen's words), we have two unquestionable authorities. First, we find the evangelist St John, referring us to the language of Isaiah, and then applying that language to Jesus of Nazareth, in the following pointed manner: "These things, said Esaias, when he saw *his* glo-"ry, and spake of him[2]." On turning, however, to the passage in Isaiah, to which St John refers, we find it commencing thus: "In the year wherein "Uzziah died, I saw *Adoni* (not Jehovah) sitting "upon a throne," &c. Nay, throughout the whole of what Isaiah saw, on that occasion, though 'JEHOVAH' is once and again noticed as being present, yet

[1] See Ezekiel ii. 4. I must here notice another peculiarity in this prophet.—In the many addresses from "*Adoni—Jehovah*" to him, Ezekiel always styles himself "*Son of Man*;" The very *title* which, in the New Testament, Christ assigns to himself. I have been long investigating this peculiarity of expression, but have never been able, in any satisfactory manner, to account for it.

[2] *St John* xii. 38—41. compared with Isaiah vi. 1.

yet it is invariably '*Adoni*,' who is represented as the 'LOGOS,' or *chief speaker*. Thus the prophet affirms, "I heard the voice of *Adoni*, saying, Whom "shall *I* send, and who will go for *us*[1]?" It was *Adoni* also who sent the prophet[2], and it was *Adoni* to whom the prophet addressed himself—"and I said, *Adoni*, how long?" It is clear, therefore, that the '*Adoni*' of Isaiah is the '*Christ*' of St John; and whether the title be justly ascribed or not, St John is responsible.

But we have higher authority, even than St John's, for the title being ascribed in the scriptures of the Old Testament to '*Christ*,' and which puts his *identity* with 'JEHOVAH' beyond all dispute. We have our *Lord himself* personally claiming *to himself* the '*Adoni*' of the CXth Psalm. "What "think ye of Christ? whose Son is he?" asks Jesus of the Pharisees. "They say unto him, The "Son of David. He saith unto them, How then "doth David in Spirit, (or being inspired), call "him *Lord*, (Adoni, אדני—in the original), saying "the Lord said unto my Lord (נאם יהוה לאדני—*Je-*"*hovah* said unto *Adoni*), sit thou[3]," &c. Here the evident distinction not merely in *sound* but in *sense*, between the titles 'JEHOVAH' and 'ADONI,' when added to the arguments already produced,

[1] This important *speciality* the LXX have miserably obscured; but the attentive christian will know what use to make of it.

[2] Verse 9. compare St Matt. xxiii. 34.

[3] See St Matt. xxii. 41—45. and Ps. cx. 1.

from the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel, must evince to the biblical student this great, but mysterious truth, that 'ADONI' *personally*, and 'JEHOVAH' *conjunctly*, belong to, and are predicated of, Christ our Saviour.

I have acknowledged that the title '*Adoni*' is not in itself a title descriptive of Deity, or peculiar to Deity. Yet it is a title both applicable and highly significant in the application, to some *situation*, *position*, or *relation*, in which Deity, *Jehovah*, stands, or may stand to man. To open up this '*hidden wisdom*,' St Peter supplies us with the necessary key. He first quotes the very passage of the CXth Psalm, on which we have been commenting; and then draws from it the following conclusion—"Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God (*Jehovah* by the reference) hath "*made* that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, "both *Lord (Adon)* and *Christ*[1]." How similar is this language to what the Psalmist makes use of, in speaking of the patriarch *Joseph*, an acknowledged type of the Messiah—"The king *made* him "*Lord* (אדון—*Adon*) of his house[2]." It can never be said, that this '*making*,' or, in other words, *appointment* of Pharaoh, had any relation to Joseph's *pre-existent state*. It was a temporary cession of, and appointment of Joseph to, the *regal dignity* of Egypt; and it was such an appointment, as, with due

[1] Acts ii. 36. [2] Ps. cv. 21.

due allowances for the inevitable defectiveness of parallel, between the *type* and the *original*, may be, with great force of truth, brought forward to explain St Peter's meaning, in the passage above cited[1].

Should it happen, that the Apostles' language, (in terming the *crucified* Jesus a 'MADE LORD,') shall be perverted to the purpose of supporting the debasing doctrines, which I feel myself in duty bound to oppose; and to which doctrines, in the eye of the ordinary observer, it may *seem* to afford some countenance, I shall certainly, before concluding the task which I have assigned to myself, effectually deprive my adversaries of this handle, by shewing the fallacy of every such attempt. In the mean time, I shall only farther observe, with respect to the merits of the title *Adon*, that to prevent any confusion, which might arise to him, 'who delights in the law of the Lord, and '*meditates* thereon,' from the circumstance of the titles '*Adon*' and '*Jehovah*,' being both translated LORD, the printers of all the best editions of the English bible have, in some measure, made a distinction,

[1] "I have set *my King*," saith *Jehovah* (in IId Psalm), "upon my "holy hill of Sion," &c. I shall give him the heathen for his inheri- "tance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Thus it was, that Christ was "*made Lord* of *God's house*, and ruler of all his "substance." Again, it was said of Joseph, that when "Pharaoh *set* "*him* over all the land of Egypt," &c. (Gen. xli. 41, 42, 43.) "they "cried before him, *Bow the knee*."—At the name of *Jesus*, that name "which is above every name, every *knee should bow*," &c. is the declaration of St Paul—Philip. ii. 9. 10.

tinction, by printing the word 'LORD' in capital letters, when it stands for the title 'JEHOVAH,' but when for 'ADONI,' by printing it in the same character with the text. Thus the English reader may learn to discriminate, and every reader ought to discriminate, if the above remarks be worthy of regard.

I come now to the other word, which I have informed you is applied *restrictively*, if not *exclusively* to 'Christ,' and which is translated 'GOD,' as well as the word "אלהים—*Aleim*"—it is the word "אלה—*Alue*:"—a word, about whose construction and import, there has been warm disputation among scriptural critics. It is acknowledged to belong to the root 'אלה—*Ale*;' and, but for the Hebrew points, those modern shifts of rabbinical infidelity, the word would at first sight discover itself to be the singular participle passive of the verb 'אלה'—by that established sign of the passive voice, the ו, or *vau*, in the third order. Whatever therefore shall be found to be the radical, inherent meaning of the active plural 'אלהים—*Aleim*,' (of which *plural* noun, this passive 'אלה—*Alue*,' cannot, without doing violence to grammar, and without bordering on blasphemy, be made the *singular*, any more than '*amatus*' can be made the singular of '*amantes*;') then the word 'אלה—*Alue*,' must retain, and must express, in a *passive* form, something of the meaning of its root, '*Ale*,' and of its cognate '*Aleim*.' But as 'אלה—*Ale*' is incontestably

testably used in the sense of '*swearing*,' 'of taking 'an *oath*,' under the penalty of a '*curse*,'—or, 'of 'engaging under a *curse*,' as Archdeacon Sharp and his associates are constrained to admit, it must follow, that '*Alem*,' *active* and *plural*, must signify '*engagers*;' and that '*Alue*,' *passive* and *singular*, must signify '*one engaged*,' &c.

That I am not furnished with equal authorities from Scripture, how and where to apply '*Alue*,' in this sense, as I have shewn myself to be furnished with, for the sense and application of the word '*Adoni*,' I am not in the least afraid to acknowledge, while allowed to call in the aid of a Commentator sufficiently qualified for the task of enabling me to give to the word '*Alue*,' the same restrictive application, which I have been enabled to give to the word '*Adoni*.' That clear and boldly decisive text of St Paul, for which he produces authority, gives me both the *explication* and the *application* of the title '*Alue*;' and, to rest satisfied with what an inspired apostle has declared, can never be to my discredit, or to the discredit of the Christian reader. 'Christ,' saith St Paul, 'hath redeemed 'us from the CURSE of the law, being MADE A 'CURSE (κατάρα execratio) for us: For it is written, '*Cursed is every one, that hangeth on a tree*[1].'

I am not ignorant of the shifts and subterfuges to

[1] Gal. iii. 13.

to which some have resorted, to deprive the christian scheme of this gracious title '*Alue*;' and to make of it any thing, or nothing, rather than admit, that the 'καταρα' of St Paul is, at the greatest distance, signified by it, or included in it. It is certain, from the tenour of St Paul's reasoning, that our redemption does, in deed, and in truth, depend upon the '*curse*' being laid on him, 'whom '*Jehovah* had made *strong* for himself.' '*Let thy* '*hand* be upon him, the man of thy right hand, the 'Son of Man,' exclaims the Psalmist[1]; in *the very terms* in which he had invoked *Jehovah*—'when he 'saw the angel, that smote the people,' &c. 'LET 'THY HAND be *against me*, and *against my Father's* '*house*[2].' That Christ bore this '*curse*,' the original and legal '*curse*,' pronounced against *sin*, and bore it for mankind at large, who would have sunk under the insupportable weight of it, is current scriptural doctrine, as well as the positive and explicit affirmation of St Paul, and has been the faith and hope of christians in all ages. And what a delightful reflection is it to think, that this our great *Alue*, he who 'was made a *curse* for us,' is introduced, by his evangelist, as opening his mouth, on his entrance into his public ministry on earth, with 'BLESSING.' Nothing indeed but *benediction*, through the whole course of his ministry, is found to

[1] Psalm lxxx. 17.

[2] 2 Sam. xxiv. 17.—"Whose Son is Christ? They say unto him, "*The Son of David.*"

to proceed from his gracious lips. For, until the consummation of all things, when he shall divest himself of the character of '*Alue*,' the Son of God forbears from pronouncing a *malediction* even on his enemies. Then indeed the case will be altered, when 'sitting on the throne of his glory[1], and having addressed those on his right hand, with a 'Come ye *blessed*,' he shall at last throw off the 'κατάρα,' from himself to those who would not accept a release from it at his hand, pronouncing their awful doom, in that dreadful sentence, 'Depart from me, ye *cursed*,' &c. This at once fixes their doom, or determines its duration; as, according to the christian plan, there can be no restoration to favour, but by Christ; and, from him, from his presence and protection, the cursed on the left hand are to be banished for ever.

The import of the word '*Alue*,' here contended for, (and I call upon the gainsayers of that import, to produce *authorities equally strong* for any other), were it properly recognized, and kept in view, would discover to us, in those passages where the word occurs, a particular beauty and emphasis, which the idea assigned to the word 'GOD,' must of necessity conceal, and, in some cases, wholly destroy. This may be proved from the following example, selected out of many. In that rapturous song of the prophet Habakkuk, upon Sigionoth, we read

[1] St Matth. xxv. 24. to the end.

read—'God came from Teman, and the holy one 'from mount Paran:' the original words are—'אלוה מתימן יבוא וקדוש מהר־פארן,' literally in our language—'*Alue will* come (יָבֹא, LXX. *veniet*, Latin) from 'the *right hand*, and the *sanctified One* from the 'mount of splendour'." The *Alue* in the first clause of the sentence is the *quedush* in the second clause, and 'קדוש' is a title which belongs peculiarly to Christ[2]. While the prophet's declaration being expressed in the future tense 'יבוא—*will come*,' must point to the *second* coming of the 'אלוה קדוש,' 'who now sitteth at *the right hand* of God, in the '*glory* of the *Father*.'

This connected view of the words, used by Habakkuk, I find particularly noticed by the learned Witsius, who says, that, 'by that very *curse*, of 'which the cross was the symbol, Christ was *sanc*-'*tified*[3].' And he quotes a Cloppenburgius to the following effect: 'In this lay the mystery of expia-'tion, that by a *curse*, the victims were *consecrated*; 'for it was necessary to devote them to a *curse*, for 'obtaining a *blessing* from heaven upon them: and 'so Christ made expiation for us, by being made 'a *curse*, when he *sanctified* himself for us, and was, 'by the Father, *sanctified* thro' sufferings[4].' Both these writers lived prior to the time of the contest about the meaning of the terms 'אלה' and 'אלוה.' These,

[1] Habak. iii. 3. [2] St John x. 36. and xvii. 19.
[3] Witsii Miscel. vol. 1. p. 509. [4] Heb. ii. 10.

This, in so far, may serve to rid my interpretation of the charge of novelty; and evidently shews, that St Paul's example was, by them, considered as warrant sufficient to justify their adoption of both his sentiment and mode of expression; which, although Dr Sharp, and the writers on his side, pretend to shudder at, I, for my own part, and I hope many a good christian with me, rejoice in them, as the sure foundation of all our comfort.

LETTER XVIII.

HAVING now shewn, that, according to the uniform style of the Old Testament in "JEHOVAH "ALEIM," (the two most frequent designations of Deity—the first of *nature*, and the other of *office*), there is *One*, to whom Scripture assigns other two titles, or words of designation, peculiarly restrictive to him—'ADONI' *Lord*, and 'ALUE' *God*; and that, by the New Testament appeal to the Old Testament record, this One is our 'CHRIST,' it will be allowed, I hope, that according to the christian

scheme, taken in its full extent, Christ, the author and giver of it, is described under what I may call three branches of character, '*Being*,' '*Acting*,' and '*Suffering*.' As '*Jehovah*,' Christ *is*—BEES, or EXISTS; as '*Adoni*,' he ACTS; as '*Alue*,' he SUFFERS. The first branch of character is inherent and *essential*, the other two are *not* essential, but *official* and *assumed*. Thus Christ is *Jehovah* by *nature*, *Adoni* by *commission*, and *Alue*, by *voluntary condescension*. *This* the whole code of Scripture demonstrates; but with this distinction, that it is the *Old* Testament which affords the proofs, while the *New* Testament makes the application. Our Saviour himself being witness, it is the *Old* Testament which '*testifies* of him';' in proof of which, 'beginning at Moses and 'the prophets,' he did, on a certain occasion, *expound* to his disciples, '*in all the Scriptures*, the 'things concerning himself[2];' while his apostle, St Paul, did '*persuade*' those who came to him, in his lodging at Rome, 'concerning Jesus, both out of '*the law of Moses*, and out of the prophets, from 'morning till evening[3].' So little ground is there for the derogatory opinion, which too many, calling themselves Christians, have formed, regarding the present usefulness of the scriptures of the Old Testament: an opinion, in which all the *avowed enemies* of the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, do boldly triumph; the more on this, greatly to be regretted, account,

[1] St John v. 39. [2] St Luke xxiv. 27.
[3] Acts xxviii. 23.

account, that they are confirmed in this opinion, by some of the *avowed friends* of that essential doctrine.

It is however enough, for my present purpose, that I am possessed of such strong authorities for affirming that Jesus Christ, as *One* in the Triune essence of Jehovah, is so minutely described, and 'testified of,' in the Old Testament scriptures; and *that* without any of the modern forms of expression, such as '*secondary*,' '*generation*,' '*filiation*,' '*Son-ship*,' and the like, which are seen to carry an idea of inferiority in their very sound. The nature of my undertaking does not require me to go further, and precisely state the evidence for a '*Trinity in Unity*,' which 'Moses and the Prophets, and 'the Psalms' afford. And yet there is a historical and well attested fact, which I cannot resist submitting to the reader's devout attention, as, in my judgement forming, to say the least, a strong presumption, that a *Trinity in Jehovah* had been the original doctrine of revelation, and the belief of the primitive world.

It is well known, that the earliest deviation from the purity of *instituted* worship, of which we have any account, was the plausible device of worshiping the *host of heaven*, the *visible* creatures, instead of the *invisible* Creator. In the language of St Paul, men "changed the *truth of God*," (that is, the *true system* of religious worship, which Jehovah

had established), " into *a lie*[1]." that is, *a falsehood* of their own invention. How soon after the dispersion at Babel, ('when the whole earth was of 'one lip, and of one speech'), this corruption may have crept in, we are not informed. It seems in Moses's time to have been prevalent, from the circumstance of his requiring the children of Israel to take 'good heed unto themselves,' lest when they saw 'the *sun*, and the *moon*, and the *stars*, even all 'the צבא השמים host of heaven, they should be driv-'en to *worship* and *serve* them[2],' &c.

Now, it is matter of notoriety to every oriental scholar, that the Hebrew language has no *singular* noun, whereby to express the word HEAVEN. The Greek and Latin languages, in sacris, adopt the Hebrew idiom. In the Lord's prayer, for instance, the words are, 'ὁ ἐν τοις ὐρανοις'—Gr. 'qui es in *cœlis*,' Lat. which art in the *heavens*. Sometimes, indeed, our translators have rendered the Hebrew שמים, in the *plural* number—" The *heavens* declare the glory of God "—(literally, in the Hebrew, '*number* 'the glory of *Al*[3].' The *heavens* therefore, being *plural* by *name*, must, consistently with the structure of the Hebrew, as an *ideal* language, be *plural*

[1] Rom. i. 25.

[2] Deut. iv. 19. and xvii. 3. The words translated' *host of heaven* have a singular coincidence with the " *truth of God*," or *Jehovah Aleim*. צבא *host*, is singular, corresponding to the singular יהוה, *Jehovah*. השמים, the *heavens*, are plural, corresponding to the plural אלהים, *Aleim*.

[3] Psalm xix. 1.

ral in *essence.* Thus, it is by *elementary* action and re-action, that the established mechanism of the mundane system is kept up and carried on. And, as the first perverters of the true theology made the '*Shemim*' their '*Aleim,*' which, in after times, the Greek idolaters rendered into their language, by the word '$\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$,' there will appear a striking analogy between the Hebrew word for '*heavens,*' and the Greek word for '*God.*' The analogy is the more complete from this circumstance, that שמים is derived from the root שם, which, as a verb, signifies to '*place;*' while '$\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$' is confessedly derived from the obsolete Greek word '$\Theta\epsilon\omega$,' the root of the reduplicate verb '$\tau\iota\theta\eta\mu\iota$,' '*pono,*' '*put,*' '*place.*' But, besides coupling שמים, a plural noun, with the noun צבא, '*host,*' in the singular number, Moses expressly asserts, that 'God called the *firmament* '(רקיע) *heavens;*' thus expressing, as some learned men have thought, (and certainly there is no heresy in adopting their opinion), that the *three* elementary agents of '*fire,*' '*light,*' and '*air,*' form a *triune firmament;* and, on this account, are the '*heavens*' said, by the Psalmist, to 'declare the glo-'ry of God;' that is, 'to *represent*, or *numerically* 'explain the glory of *Al,*' the '*sight*' of which '*glory,*' Moses, in strict conformity with this opinion, does acknowledge 'to be *like devouring* FIRE[1].' In this case, I may well ask, whether there exists any *inferiority* or *subordination* in the material, and at-

[1] Exod. xxiv. 17.

atmospheric trinity? Are they not, by the tenour of their formation, all of equal condition, character, or aptitude, for their several functions? Why not therefore extend this character of the *representative* to the object *represented;* and, through this our '*glass*' of *sense*, view, though '*darkly*,' the *Divine essence?* There is a time coming, when we shall see '*προσωπον προς προσωπον*[1]' *face to face*, the '*προσωπα*,' *faces* or *persons* in Jehovah; not indeed in all the *essential* splendour of Divine glory, (as I question, whether even the beatified saints will, as creatures, be capable of *immediately* beholding *that*), but through the *medium*, or *veil*, or *brightness*, of glorified humanity in *him*, the *Adoni*, the *Alue*, the '*אל גבור*,' the GOD-MAN, whom we shall *then* see '*καθως εστι*—*as He is*[2].'

It would not afford edification to the reader, nor be attended with any sort of satisfaction to myself, to wade through the absurd Theogonies of later antiquity. How these were vamped up into a system for the adoption of the Grecian and Roman sages; and how that system was at heart despised, although persevered in, by those sages, is sufficiently well known. Even Socrates, the great patron of what modern philosophy chooses to denominate '*Theism*,' (a term similar, to say the least, in sound, with '*Deism*,') when dying, as is said, for the *belief* of the *true God*, did sing a hymn to Apollo, (which

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12. [2] 1 St John iii. 2.

which perhaps his admirers may explain to their own satisfaction) and, afterwards, ordered a cock to be sacrificed to Esculapius, (which even the admirers of Socrates can, in no respect, reconcile to the character they draw of him.) But, be these things as they may, it is enough for my purpose, that, in the scriptures of the Old Testament, I find *plurality* ascribed to JEHOVAH; which *plurality* is, in my apprehension, specified to be a *Trinity*, from the Divine manifestation vouchsafed to the patriarch Abraham. For, upon this original foundation is built the whole doctrinal fabric of the New Testament, where are contained the most instructive illustrations and applications of the *types* and *shadows*, exhibited during the Mosaic dispensation, to the *substance*, and *realities* peculiar to the dispensation of our Redeemer.

Faith in a Trinity in Unity did therefore long precede the revelation of the Gospel. Nay, this faith would seem to form the basis of, and to be interwoven into, every system of even false divinity, of which we have any account; until that, long posterior to the true Messiah, the impostor Mahomet, assisted by a Jewish apostate, who had rejected Christ, and by an Arian heretic, who had made a creature of God our Saviour, did first form the *Unitarian* scheme of Theology, with all its *subordinate* appendages.

The differences, which may have existed in the pri-

primitive church, were not occasioned so much the doctrine of a *Trinity*, in the abstract, as by the various modes of explaining the doctrine, and of forming conceptions regarding it. Recourse was had to numberless comparisons and similes in explanation of it, which I fear have proved not a little injurious to the cause which they were meant to serve. One favourite simile, with Tertullian and others, his contemporaries, is that of the '*sun*,' the '*ray*,' the '*light*.' This, it has been contended, goes to prove the *fountainship* of God the Father, since the *sun* is the *fountain* of *light*. Yet Moses informs us that the *light* was created *three* days prior to the formation of the *sun*; in which case, the proof contended for, becomes completely fallacious. Again, *Gregory Nazianzen*, I think, does somewhere in his writings, introduce 'Adam, Eve, and Seth,' while his friend *Basil* has recourse to the colours of the rainbow, as explanatory of the Trinity. Indeed this humour of hunting after similitudes, on a subject of mysterious intricacy, and where every step appears to be dangerous, seems to have more or less pervaded the church in every age. Thus the famous *Abelard*, who flourished in the 12th century, in illustrating this doctrine to his pupils, draws a comparison from the science of logic, in which he excelled, and affirms, that "as the *three* pro-"positions of a syllogism, are but *one* and the same "argument, so the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, "are one and the same essence." This comparison did not fail to excite alarm, and to subject its author

author to charges of a very opposite nature; viz. *Sabellianism* and *Tritheism.*

Another comparison, more palpable than the abstract one of *Abelard*, was drawn from the three dimensions of a *solid*—'length,' 'breadth,' and 'thickness,' which, although three distinct subsistencies, make only *one* body. Of the same description is the well known similitude of an equilateral triangle, which, in representation of the Holy Trinity, is often depicted, with the word 'יהוה' included between the sides; nor can any representation more consonant to the scriptural view of the doctrine be well conceived. One thing indeed is obvious from this, and the other figurative representations just noticed, that there is not the least semblance of *one* of the *three* subsistencies, '*producing*,' '*generating*,' '*emitting*,' or 'being the *fountain*' of 'the other *two*;' or of any '*subordination*,' or '*inferiority*' existing among them; or of affixing the titles, *First*, *Second*, and *Third*, as denoting distinct and restrictive properties in each of them.

In this observation I am supported by the acute Mr *Bayle*, who, though not to be adduced, as affording authority in matters of faith, may be admitted as no mean logician; being profoundly skilled in deducing consequences, and in drawing conclusions. Mr Bayle writes—"If the comparison "of the Trinity held good with the '*syllogism*,' "and the *three dimensions*, it must be very different

"from what it is *represented*[1]." To discover the mode in which the doctrine of a Trinity was *represented* in the days of Mr Bayle, it is sufficient that we have recourse to his contemporaries in Britain, viz. Bishops Pearson and Bull, with their numerous followers, who *represent* it to be "a Trinity of "a *First*, being a *fountain* of Deity to the *Second* "and *Third*; to the *Second*, by the mode of *ge-* "*neration*—to the *Third*, by the mode of *spiration*;" two terms, one should think, not quite congruous to any conceptions which the human mind can form of Deity, whether guided by nature, or by revelation; and merely subservient to the favourite hypothesis of *subordination* and *inferiority*, '*etiam* '*quoad divinitatem*,' of which Bishop Bull, and a host of modern writers, are such strenuous asserters. Nay, I do maintain, that the scheme of *Arius*, and *Socinus*, is but an *enlargement* of the scheme here alluded to. I do not say, that the asserters of the *subordination* and *inferiority* of the *Son*, did *designedly* lend any support whatever to *Arian* or *Socinian* tenets; but I do say, (the writings of both parties being what I appeal to), that the concessions of the *one* have been laid hold of by the *other*, as affording the *premises* on which all their *conclusions* are founded.

If I have been able to impress these my sentiments on the mind of the unprejudiced reader, it will

[1] See Bayle, Article—*Abelard*.

will surely occur to him, as a most desirable point in theology, to discover a mode of conceiving this fundamental doctrine of christianity, without recurring to '*communication*,' '*derivation*,' '*creation*,' or any term of like import, which, however specious in itself, may be perverted to imply a *sub* or a *super*, a *greater* or a *less*, in Deity. Such is the mode which I would now recommend, of expressing our belief of a Trinity; that is, of *Three, conjunct, co-equal, co-eternal, collateral, co-ordinate;* who, thus existing in the most perfect and indiscriminate equality, or *consubstantiality*, are constituent of *One* JEHOVAH. This is a scheme of doctrine which, although apparently (and but apparently) destitute of that countenance which *human* authority bestows, will be found fully consonant to that *divine* system laid down by the original Record in the *Old* Testament, as the established foundation of what are called the clearer indications contained in the *New:* and, I may say farther, that it is fully as intelligible by, and adequate to, our finite and frail capacities, as the schemes of *Arius, Socinus*, or of *Dr Bull*, with all the weight of human sanction, which has been bestowed upon the latter.

In delineating this truly scriptural scheme, I have made use of the term 'THREE,' without any adjunct whatever, in conformity to the language of St John—"There are THREE." My reason for doing so is a very cogent one, namely, the *danger*, which has arisen, and must arise, from either the

misapprehension, or the misapplication, of any such *adjunct*. Thus, a short time prior to the æra of Dr Bull's writings, the celebrated patron of human '*Intellect*,' Dr Cudworth, maintained '*Three* distinct spiritual *substances*' in Trinity, with reservation of *supremacy*, and of *absolute Divine* honour to the Father, who, according to him, is *alone truly and properly God*; the Son and Spirit being *God* only by the Father's *concurrence* with them, and by their *subordination* and *subjection* to him.

After Dr Cudworth, the great Dr Sherlock trod in the same path: Though he rejected Dr Cudworth's conclusion, yet did he affirm, that there are 'three infinite distinct *minds*' in Trinity. This he endeavoured to explain upon the principles of the Cartesian philosophy, which, at that period, was not wholly out of repute.

Against Dr Sherlock's opinion, which by many was looked upon as false, heretical, and impious, Dr South came forward, supported by a decree of the University of Oxford, condemning the opinion, as open *Tritheism*. To this Dr Sherlock replied; insomuch, that between these two eminent divines a metaphysical warfare commenced, of which the avowed Socinians, their contemporaries, did not fail to avail themselves, having the audacity to claim Bishop Bull, as no longer halting between two opinions, but as having passed over to their side of the controversy.

From

From this late instance, among many others, we may see what danger, as I have already observed, is to be apprehended from the application of any such adjunct, as *mind*, *substance*, &c. to the '*Three*' in Jehovah; since this application may so easily be perverted to any sense, as different parties please. Yet, as it is scarcely possible to speak, or to write, with any degree of precision, on this subject, without using some definite adjunct or other, there appears to me none safer, or less objectionable, (when stripped of it metaphysical garb, in which Dr Clarke, and such as he, have artfully decked it out), than the English noun, 'PERSON.' In my idea, it corresponds with the Greek scriptural term, 'προσωπον;' and still more pointedly expresses the sense of the Hebrew scriptural term 'אנשים,' used by the sacred historian, to denote 'the *Men*' (as our translation has it) who appeared to Abraham, and who, in their relation to Jehovah, might have been, with as much propriety, denominated '*Persons*.' Still, however, I can discover neither *authority*, nor *necessity*, for the restrictive application, adopted so universally, of '*first*,' '*second*,' and '*third*,' person. These are marks of distinction which I never make use of, as implying *precedency*, or *post-cedency*, terms, in my opinion, wholly inadmissible on this subject.

I am not ignorant of the jarring, with respect to the Greek words 'ουσια' and 'υποστασις,' and the Latin words '*substantia*,' and '*persona*,' which so long subsisted

subsisted between the Eastern and Western churches; and which, in the latter part of his life, *Athanasius* was fortunate enough to remove. If these, and other early differences, are traced to their proper source, they will be found to proceed, in a great measure, from the diffusive copiousness of the Greek language bearing away the expressive simplicity of the Hebrew. Had the use and application of the terms 'יהוה אלהים' 'JEHOVAH ALEIM,' been understood and attended to; or, were they but understood and attended to, *even now*, the door had been, and would be at this moment, shut against all the perplexing intricacies, with which, on the subject of the Holy Trinity, the church has been, and is still, agitated. For, at this very hour, it is obvious to the theological student, and a matter of sincere regret to every sound divine, that there does exist a most wanton spirit of cavil, as to the *English* words which have been adopted, in expressing the church's sense of this doctrine; and an unhappy propensity towards the arbitrary introduction of *cramp* and *uncouth* language, in supporting what passes under the name of 'ORTHODOXY.' There is no candid adherer to the *orthodox* side, who does not readily acknowledge, that it had been better, if the language, to which I allude, had never been adopted. And this acknowledgement may suffice to show, that the *scriptural representation*, which it is so much the wish of my heart to see prevail, ought to be *studied*, and *strictly adhered to*, were it for no better reason than that the maze of confusion, in which even the

learned

learned orthodox have involved the subject, might be got rid of, and the TRUTH rendered as intelligible, as it is confessedly important.

LETTER XIX.

IN opposition to the opinion, which I have ventured to express, on the deep and mysterious subject still before me, I foresee, that it will be contended, that no explanation whatever can be attempted, without being open to controversy; in proof of which, I shall be told, that the very *remedy*, which I now propose, is no less objectionable than is the *malady* of which I complain. Not discouraged, however, by such a negative sort of opposition, and having myself, as I think, discovered the two most prominent objections to my plan, and under which every inferior objection may be held to be included, I shall now proceed to discuss these, with the hope of doing them completely away, before I bring this interesting branch of theological science to an end.

I.

I. I shall be told, that even upon the plan, for the adoption of which I am so zealously contending, I *must*, and *do* acknowledge an *inferiority*, and *subordination* in TRINITY, since the two titles, on which I lay such stress, אדני, *Adoni*, '*made Lord*,' and אלוה, *Alue*, '*made curse*,' do, by my own explication, and use of them, convey this very idea. This I am not only ready to admit; but even feel cause to rejoice in it, since thus it is, that *He, who is my Lord, is become my propitiation.* But should there, from this admission, be supposed to follow either a *sound*, or *shadow* of *subordination*, or of *inferiority*, it must be remembered, that I ascribe *these* not to '*nature*' or '*essence*, (where I am taught to believe there is an absolute and unrestricted *co-ordination*, and *equality*), but to '*œconomy*' and '*office*:' and, for this distinction, so important in itself, though so little attended to in most disquisitions on this subject, I am prepared to plead the very authority, which the most strenuous objector can possibly require, the authority of Scripture, and of the primitive Fathers.

To be sure, in the light in which Christianity is now-a-days represented, as simply a system of ethics, or collection of moral precepts, there is no shadow of this, or of any other distinction whatever, either seen, or thought worthy of being enquired after. But, in the higher light, in which the inspired writers represent it, as a 'MYSTERY,' (notwithstanding the buffoonery of witticism, to which

which this sadly misunderstood term has given birth), as *a divine preconcerted scheme*, as the *eternal covenant*, entered into for man's redemption, (which representation the words '*Jehovah Alcim*' do manifestly corroborate), the distinction, here pleaded for, will appear both natural and necessary—*natural*, by reason of the radical signification of these two original titles of Deity; and *necessary* towards our apprehension and belief of this gracious scheme.

To this purpose we meet, both in Scripture, and in early antiquity, with the term above used, being a term of the most happy adaptation, viz. '*οικονομια*,' '*œconomy*.' It is used by St Paul, and translated '*dispensation*,' with the words '*of the gospel*,' added by the translators; literally however, 'But if, 'against my will, the *œconomy* be committed unto 'me, what is my reward then,' &c.

From the appropriation of the word '*οικονομια*' to what St Paul scruples not to call '*μυστηριον*—*mystery*,' the Fathers have adopted the word, and made great use of it. Thus it is to be met with in Ignatius [2], in Justin Martyr [3], and in Irenæus [4]. Even Athanasius

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 17. The word is similarly translated in Ephes. iii. 2. and is expressly termed (verses 3d and 4th) 'the *mystery*'—'the *mys-* '*tery* of Christ; and in Coloss. i. 25. the '*dispensation*,' that is, '*œco-* '*nomy*' of God, is called (v. 26.) 'the *mystery* hid from ages.' Verse 27. 'this *mystery*—which is *Christ*.'

[2] Epist. ad Ephes. [3] Dial. cum Trypho.

[4] Adversus Hæreses.

sius himself, on whom is laid such a weight of authority, has frequent recourse to the term 'œcono-'my,' for solving difficulties, and for answering the various cavils of his antagonist; attributing that, which is predicated of the *Logos*, as man, to what he calls 'the œconomy of the Union[1];' and thereby, accounting clearly and satisfactorily for all that apparent contrariety of character, which occurs in descriptions of the '*Logos*,' '*Adoni*,' '*Alue*,' viz. the *Saviour of mankind*.

After Athanasius, and perhaps in conformity with his language, Theodoret distinctly avers—"την ενανθρωπησιν τȣ Θεȣ λογου καλουμεν οικονομιαν"—'The incarnation of God, *the word*, we call ŒCONO-'MY;' and Theodoret is known to use the vocable accordingly. Nay Dr Bull, forgetting his doctrine of '*inferiority*,' etiam quoad divinitatem, does not hesitate, when hard pressed, to fly to this '*œconomy*' for refuge. Thus, both in the case of 'ὑπηρετης,' before noticed, and in vindication of Origen from an accusation of Huetius, Dr Bull refers Origen's obnoxious expression, 'ad Christi *œconomiam*, in 'assumpta humana natura susceptam—*to the œco-'nomy* of Christ, undertaken in the human nature, 'which he assumed.' Further authority I think it needless to adduce, it being amply sufficient for my purpose, that the word 'οικονομια—*œconomy*,' is sanctioned by an apostle, is adopted by the Fathers,

[1] See Dispute with an Apollinarian, as translated by Beza.

thers, and is even recurred to by learned divines of sentiments opposite to mine, when it suits their purpose. To me, indeed, the adaptation of this term to the cause which I have in hand, seems so complete, that I am led to pronounce it to be the only key to be procured, for opening up the *many* beauties, and for explaining the few difficulties, which occur in the revelation of the 'great *mystery* 'of godliness.'

'Οικονομια' is indisputably a term of, or belonging to, *office*. It has neither connection with, nor so much as an aspect towards '*nature*' or '*essence*;' but is something superinduced upon it, by condescension and free choice. It is, in short, a *disposition* of distinct branches of *office*, by the *Three* (Aleim) in *One*, (Jehovah), *conjunctly* and *severally*, 'a '*singulis in solidum*,' graciously undertaken for conducting and executing the wonderful scheme of mercy and love, prepared and 'promised before 'the world began.'

In this '*œconomical*' view, therefore, the doctrine of the Trinity will appear to be as plain, and the belief of it, as consolatory as our limited faculties can conceive or wish for. We behold it thus stripped at once of that adventitious incumbrance of metaphysical language, which tends so much to obscure it; and which gives a handle so befitting the enemies of this fundamental doctrine, that they

have never yet refrained from using it, and, as they think, successfully, against their opponents.

Before, however, I enter on the particular application of this valuable designation of our invaluable system of faith, I must not omit to notice the

IId objection, which offers itself, against my mode of illustrating the subject in hand. It will be affirmed, that this mode does not only trench upon the *Unity* of God, and upon that which Dr Bull denominates "the Divine *Monarchy*"—*not* to be preserved *inviolate*, (according to him), without placing a due *subordination* in the Son to the Father; but also establishes the existence of *Three* Gods, and is nothing short of downright *Tritheism*.

As to the first branch of this weighty charge, if I have duly stated it, there is evidently introduced a confusion of terms, which ought to be kept asunder. The words '*Unity*' and '*Monarchy*,' although somewhat similar in sense, are completely dissimilar in application. '*Unity*' may be applied to *plurality* of any description: 'A *city* that is at *unity* in itself,' says the Psalmist[s]—'Ye are all ONE (εἷς masc.) in Christ,' says St Paul[t]. On the other hand, '*monarchy*,' according to our acceptation, will by no means admit of such extension; but is wholly *personal*, and confined to *individual* application. Wherefore, if by the es[illegible] Divine

[illegible]

[s] Psalm [illegible]

'monarchy,' Dr Bull means to assert '*personal* '*prerogative*,' as seems to me to be, and must of necessity be, his meaning, his followers will have some difficulty in freeing the language of St John, 'That they might know *Thee*—τον μονον αληθινον Θεον '—the *only true God*',' &c. from the perverse rendering, which the *Arian*, the *Socinian*, and *Unitarian*, put upon it.

For my own part, being convinced that this scheme of asserting the '*Divine Monarchy*,' forms the great basis of the Arian structure, it is my undisguised purpose to bring every thing which I have said, and which I yet may have to say, on the present important branch of my subject, to militate directly against that *monarchy*: While, with respect to the real essential *Unity* of the *Godhead*, that is, the '*Unity of* and *in Trinity*,' that sure and certain ground of all my faith, and of all my hope, it is, upon my plan, secured, and established, beyond the reach of controversy, as will be made apparent, from the reply, which I have in contemplation to make to the second branch of the charge alluded to, that of espousing the doctrine of *Tritheism*.

In fact, this is by no means a charge of modern [illegible] antiquarian, Mr Bingham, speaks [illegible] instead of *Three* di- [illegible] vine

'vine persons, under the *œconomy* of Father, Son, 'and Holy Spirit, believed three collateral, co-or-'dinate, self-originated beings, making them three, 'absolute, independent principles, without any re-'lation of Father and Son, which,' he adds, 'is 'the most proper notion of *Three Gods*[1].' Mr Bingham is of opinion, that it was the *Gnostics* who first introduced this doctrine of *Tritheism*, which was afterwards espoused by the *Priscillianists*. With respect, however, to this latter class of heretics, he seems to be mistaken. For Abbé Fleuri, a writer equally skilled in the history of ancient times, tells us, on the authority of *Augustine* and *Orosius*, that the '*Priscillianists*' did not confess a Trinity, 'but 'in name only, saying with *Sabellius*, that Father, 'Son, and Holy Ghost, were all one, without any 'distinction of persons[2].' Hence, it is reasonable to conclude, that if Mr *Bingham* is mistaken with regard to the tenets of the *Priscillianists*, he may be mistaken also with regard to those of the *Gnostics* on this point.

It seems, however, let the authors of this heresy be who they may, that, in the time of Origen, there really did exist such *Tritheists* as Mr Bingham has described, 'who brought in the proper doctrine of '*Three Gods*, by denying the subordination and rela-'tion of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and by asserting

[1] Bing. Antiq. B. XI. ch. 3.

[2] Fleur. Hist. Liv. XVII. n. 56.

'ing three co-ordinate and independent principles, 'and by baptizing in the name of three such 'αναρχοι,' 'αναιτιοι,' 'αγεννητοι,' (as the apostolical canons term them) 'Three unoriginated,' 'uncaused,' 'unbegotten' 'principles, wholly independent of one another.' I fear that Mr *Bingham* has rather been presumptuous, in saying, that '*subordination*,' (in his acceptation of the word), was *denied* at so early a date; when, I have reason to doubt, whether (in such acceptation) it was, at that date, even heard of at all in the christian world. And it is somewhat strange, that Mr Bingham should stigmatize the term 'αγεννητοι,' as *heretical*, when it behoved him to know, that *Ignatius* attributes it expressly to *one* of the *two* subordinate 'υποστασεις;' and that *Athanasius* confesses it to belong to the *other*. Yet Mr Bingham is content to use the term '*œconomy*,' when writing on this subject; and applies it to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Had he understood it, and had he allowed it, when understood, to aid him in the explanation of the doctrine under consideration, Mr Bingham, in all probability, would have had another view of that doctrine, than the one which he has given to the public.

But these are not the only observations, suggested by the charge of *Tritheism*. All the ancient heretics, we know, derive their name from that of their founder. *Nicolaitans, Ebionites, Cerinthians, Cerdonians, Marcionites, Montanists, Valentinians, Sabellians*, &c. &c. are those who adopted the opinions

nions of *Nicolas*, of *Ebion*, of *Cerinthus*, &c. &c. It seems, therefore, to be a question, not altogether impertinent, 'When, where, and *by whom*, the *Tri-* 'theist heresy was first preached?' Much weight has been attached to the 49th apostolic canon, against baptizing, 'εις τρεις αναρχους,' *into three unoriginateds*: and Dr Bull applies this canon to the support of his own hypothesis[1]. But the 'Apostolical 'Constitutions,' a work of the same suspicious nature with the 'Apostolic Canons,' will explain this matter. For therein the apostles are introduced, as giving an account of the false apostles that arose after them, such as *Cleobius*, *Dositheus*, *Menander*, &c. and then it is added— 'τουτων οι μεν πολλους θεους, 'οι δε τρεις εναντιους, αναρχους, αει συνοντας εαυτοις δοξαζουσι— 'Of these, some own the doctrine of many 'Gods, some only of *three*, but contrary to each 'other without beginning, and ever with one an-'other[2].' Here we have a key to the canon, 'if any authority is due either to the *key* or the *canon*. In proof of their own origin, the Apostolical Constitutions are not afraid to declare— 'ημεις δε ενα μονον Θεον καταγγελλομεν, του Χριστου πατερα, μη 'αυτο-αιτιον και αυτο-γενεθλον, αλλ' αιδιον και αναρχον, ου 'δευτερον οντα, η τριτον, η πολλοστον, αλλα μονον αιδιως— 'We preach one only God, the Father of Christ, not a 'Being who caused or begat himself, but eternal, and 'without original, not twofold or threefold, or manifold, 'but eternally single, or one only. Here we have a 'doctrine

[1] De Subordin. c. 1. § 6.
[2] Apos. Constit. ch. vi. s. 51.

doctrine laid down pretty nearly akin to that of the '*Divine Monarchy*,' for the support of which, Dr Bull and his associates are so extremely anxious.

Now, according to the design of the Constitutions, the charge of heresy seems to attach to the belief of '*τρεις αναρχοι*' being '*εναντιον*,' i. e. *contrary*, or *opposite to*; (the fancy of *opposite* principles in Deity, being an old error, and long prior to the time of Manes)—or, if the suspicion be justly founded, that the 'Constitutions' have either sprung from, or have been interpolated by, *Arian* hands, it is not assuming too much to suppose, that their authors did affix the '*εναντιον*' as a stigma on the doctrine, otherwise *Anti-Arian*, in order that it might have at least an unfavourable aspect.

Admitting however, that the 49th Canon Apostolical possesses all the authenticity, and, of course, all the authority, which have been claimed in its behalf, where exists the necessity for squeezing the intended inference out of it, and thus making the object of the prohibition heretical? We read of some innovators—*the Eunomians*, if I mistake not, whose practice was to 'baptize into the death of 'Christ.' As they could plead for this practice the authority of an apostle [1], it could not be deemed, with the least semblance of propriety, an *heretical practice*. Notwithstanding, it was expressly forbid-

 den,

[1] Rom. vi. 3.

den, by repeated canons, and condemned as a blasphemous alteration of the instituted form, over which the church has, in all ages, most carefully watched. It would therefore be no less an act of candour than of justice in those, who are ready to charge others with a breach of the Apostolical Canons, to put the same construction upon the 49th canon, which, I have shewn, ought to be put on those canons which condemned the practice above noticed; and not to stigmatize with the brand of *heresy*, the *titles* mentioned in it; as they well know, from parallel cases, that this canon might have had another design, and I have as good a right to interpret it in the one way, as they have to interpret it in the other.

Yet after all this reasoning, in refutation of the charge of '*Tritheism*,' that is, of 'believing in '*Three* Gods,' I should be glad to be informed, even were I thus to express myself, (which, to avoid offence, I have never done), where either the *harm*, or the *offence* would be. The celebrated Italian reformer *Zanchius*, among his various other works, has a treatise, entitled, '*De tribus Elohim*.' How is this title to be expressed in our language? The word '*Elohim*,' (that is, without the Hebrew points, '*Aleim*,') is, uniformly in the English Bible, rendered *God* or *Gods*. '*Three God*,' we cannot say. The treatise of *Zanchius* must therefore be 'CONCERNING THREE GODS.' Yet, by all the reformers, *Zanchius* was held in high estimation, being

ing never so much as suspected of *heresy*, or of *unsound doctrine*, in this important article. The case is simply this: If I believe, as I do most firmly believe, that, in the *radical* sense, the Hebrew title of Deity, אלהים, implies 'relation, agency, covenanting,' &c. I am not only justified in saying, but I am compelled to say, that the 'THREE IN JEHOVAH ARE ALEIM;' whereas, from the defectiveness of the English language, fixed beyond all possible remedy, I neither can, nor do venture to say, 'THAT THE THREE IN THE LORD ARE GODS; and it will prove, in any critic, both unfriendly and unjust, to attempt to blacken the character of these Letters by any such unmerited imputation. To be called *Tritheist*, if Θεος be permitted to stand, in all respects, for *Aleim*, I am so far from being ashamed, that in common with those, who have embraced the same sentiments on this important subject, I accept of the designation as a mark of distinction from those who differ in sentiment from us. These men, to be consistent, must and do value themselves on being denominated THEISTS, a term which, according to their own confession, is *only* applicable to *Jews*, to CHRISTIANS, and *Mahometans*; (a goodly conjunction)—but which, notwithstanding their philosophical declamation, is a term, in my estimation, no less degrading to the true Christian, than the term TRITHEIST can be in their estimation. On the other hand, where 'Θεος' is used for 'JEHOVAH,' as it frequently is, with all my suspected inclination to he-

resy, I am restrained by the idiom of the Hebrew tongue, as the original channel of divine revelation, from falling into the ungrammatical blunder of affixing the number 'THREE' to a word which has *no plural*.

LETTER XX.

IT is upon the acknowledged importance of the august title 'JEHOVAH,' the *proper*, the *peculiar*, the *incommunicable* name of the TRUE, the ONLY SUPREME BEING, assumed by himself, and revealed to man 'for his learning,' that not only my train of reasoning, in the foregoing pages, is founded, but that any distinct conception depends, which the weak intellect of man can form, on the interesting subject of the DIVINE NATURE. Neither the Greek, the Latin, nor the English language, possesses a term of synonimous import to the Hebrew term JEHOVAH, or expressive of that import. For these languages possess no term, applied to Deity, but what is equally applicable, and is constantly applied, to *false objects* of worship, in common

tion with the *true object*. So far from this being the case with the title 'JEHOVAH,' it is this very title which distinguishes and marks the superiority of the *true God*, in every instance where an *idol* is contrasted with him; while to none of the three languages, in which the translation of Scripture is familiar to us, is any such power of distinction given. Thus, in that awful transaction between Moses and Pharaoh king of Egypt, both the force of Moses' first address, and the pertinency of Pharaoh's answer, are, in our translation, much obscured, not to say wholly kept out of sight. 'Thus 'saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go. 'And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord? I know 'not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go[s].' Because of this language, Pharaoh has been branded with the name of *Atheist*; but that he deserved this title, does not at all appear from the original history. Pharaoh had '*Aleim*' of his own, although he knew not the '*Aleim*' of Israel, particularly under the designation of JEHOVAH, whereon the Jewish lawgiver lays the stress of his commission: 'thus saith JEHOVAH, the ALEIM of Israel.' Nay Pharaoh himself, after repeated humiliations, in the course of that great contest, is brought to acknowledge that he had 'sinned against JEHOVAH, 'YOUR *Aleim*.' Wherefore he adds, 'Entreat '*Jehovah*, YOUR *Aleim*, for me[t].'

Many

[s] Exod. v. 1. 2. [t] Exod. x. 16, 17.

Many are the places in the Old Testament, in which, if we carry with us this *distinctive* sense of the title 'JEHOVAH,' we shall discover an irresistible strength of emphasis; concealed, if not altogether buried, under the common acceptation of the title 'LORD,' as synonimous with 'GOD.' Thus, in that exclamation of the people, on occasion of Elijah's victory over the priests of Baal, 'JEHOVAH, He is the ALEIM; JEHOVAH, He is the ALEIM[1].'

The question which, on weighing all these circumstances, naturally suggests itself, is this; 'What, 'under the patriarchal and legal dispensations, 'was the design of the name 'JEHOVAH' being the 'incommunicable title of the *true God*, (to speak in 'common language), of him, "whose name A-"LONE IS JEHOVAH?" Was it not to denote his ESSENCE, in contradistinction to the *essence* of the *sun*, *moon*, and *stars*, or the *essence* of an *idol*? If then the Scriptures, in which this august name was originally revealed, are so far from being 'contrary' to the revelation of the gospel, that they are its very basis, it follows, that the title 'JEHO-'VAH,' must be, and is of equal importance to christians, that it was to the people of God, in old time; and therefore whatever the designation 'JE-'HOVAH ALEIM' signified or exhibited to *them*, it certainly signifies and exhibits the same to *us*. But in every *exhibition*, *declaration*, or *manifestation*, with

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 39.

with which this compound designation of the *true God* is connected, we discover not even a hint or implication of those peculiarities, which christian language has latterly ascribed to him; such as, '*eternal generation*,' '*procession*,' '*subordination*,' &c. And even where, in the sacred pages at large, we meet with any expressions which seem to import any such peculiarities, we wrest the Scriptures, if we do not account for them, and proceed to reconcile them to the ancient standard of truth, viz. '*Moses and the Prophets*,' by means of that 'ŒCONOMY,' already treated of. Yet, even of that '*œconomy*,' so necessary to this salutary purpose, the main foundation rests upon the *signification* of '*Jehovah*,' and of its adjunct '*Aleim*;' and, upon the *distinction* which, at the same time, subsists between them: the one denoting *essence*, the other expressing *relation*; and that *not relation* in the abstract, but of a particular quality, as '*agreeing*,' '*engaging*,' and '*covenanting*' by *oath*, to the performance of some undertaking, which had man for its object.

However strange such a quality as this may appear to some calling themselves christians, the more polite heathens seem to have entertained a kind of notion of some such thing in Deity. This appears very distinctly from the Greeks having their 'Ζευς ὁρκιος,' and the Latins having their '*Jupiter Fœderator*,' their *sworn*,' or *covenanting God*. Nay, more appositely still to this sense of '*Aleim*,' we find the eccle-

ecclesiastical historian *Eusebius*, quoting the Tyrian *Sanchoniathon*, as translated by *Philo Biblius*, who says, that 'the συμμαχοι, *confederates* of the God Κρο-'νος, were called ELOEIM.' Although, not now having the book in my possession, I cannot refer to the immediate passage, yet I well remember that the Dutch writer, *Witsius*, treating of our Saviour's exclamation on the cross, renders the words of St. Matthew thus: 'Eli Eli—*Deum meum fortem*—'my *strong* God;' but the words of St Mark, he renders 'Eloi Eloi—*Deum meum* CONFŒDUSTUM—'my *confederate God.*' Accordingly Witsius entitles one of his productions '*Oiconomia Fœderis*,' 'the Œconomy of the Covenant.'

These remarks may serve at least to shew, that there have previously been some distant allusions to the truths now inculcated; and that the idea of God (in the proper sense of the term) COVENANTING, is neither such a novelty, nor such a singularity, as certain theologians, for reasons of their own, would have the christian world believe; but is indeed an idea originally excited in the mind, from the radical import of the title 'ALEIM,' once so well understood by mankind. By such, then, as believe a *Trinity of* ALEIM, that is, of *confederates* in *One* JEHOVAH, the extension of this *covenant*, or *confederation, to all the Three*, will not be objected against; provided that the terms are found completely consistent with that *absolute, unrestricted, indiscriminate*, ESSENTIAL *equality*, which subsists, and must

must subsist in JEHOVAH. Of these Three, thus to be looked up to and believed in, there are Two, whose undertaken share of office, in this 'Œconomia Fœderis,' or *covenanting œconomy*, is clearly perceived, being distinctly declared to us: The *One* covenanted to become '*Son*,' '*Adoni*,' '*Alue*,' and in that assumed capacity to DO, and to SUFFER all that was necessary for the redemption of fallen man; constituting, as it does constitute, the great end of the whole *œconomy*. The other covenanted to become the *Holy*, that is, the *sanctifying*, or *holy-making Spirit*, in order to *strengthen* the *assumed humanity*—the Son of *Man*, for what he had agreed to *suffer*; as thus described by the Psalmist: 'Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, 'upon the Son of *Man*, whom thou *madest strong* for 'thyself[1];'—'for God anointed Jesus of Nazareth 'with the Holy Ghost, and *with power*[2].'" And in order also to *sanctify*, to *fit*, and prepare the church, not as a *partner* in this covenant, (according to fanatical presumption), but as the happy object of it, for walking worthy of the christian vocation, and for its members being, in due time, made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. There remains *One other* of the ever blessed *Three*, regarding whom I feel no small difficulty how to express myself, so as neither to mistake, nor be misunderstood in a point, to which some have attached such superior consequence, and where, at the same

 time,

1. Psalm lxxx. 17. 2. Acts x. 38.

time, there exists not such precision of character, as does exist in the case of the *Two* already noticed. Yet may we humbly hope to discover sufficient evidence of the share, which this Great One has covenanted to take to himself in the Divine Œconomy: And that, 'sub debita tanto nomini reve-'rentia,' it is no less than to sustain what, I hope, I may be permitted to call "PONDUS DEITATIS," the *whole weight*, (in the Hebrew language), the כבוד of Deity—to be the PROPITIANDUS, *the demander, and the accepter of Propitiation, Satisfaction, Intercession, Merits*, &c. and, in that capacity of SUPREME REPRESENTATIVE, to be vested with the august title of FATHER, when about to be distinguished from the *other Two*, and to be dignified with the epithet of 'FIRST;' not, as in our conception of rank, because he is *before*, or *above* 'SECOND,' and 'THIRD,' but because he is 'Primus inter pares,' *President* (with the utmost reverence be it spoken) of the Divine Council; and *this*, during the continuance of the mysterious *Œconomy*, and until the consummation of all things, when ŒCONOMY shall cease, and JEHOVAH 'be ALL in ALL'[1].'

On this plan, how easily and satisfactorily are those passages of Scripture understood, which speak of 'God *sending* his Son,' of 'God *sending* his Spirit,' and such like. These the advocates of '*subor-'dination*,' and its concomitant '*inferiority*,' do, at

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

at present, appropriate to their own hypothesis; upon the hasty supposition, that *submitting to be sent* does of necessity imply '*subordination*.' If I mistake not, however, this inference is set aside, on no less authority than that of our Lord himself. 'The servant,' says he, 'is not greater than his lord, 'neither he *that is sent greater* than he that *sent* '*him*[1].' He does not say what some, it seems, would have him to have meant, that he who is sent is *not equal to*, or *so great as the sender*, but only 'THAT HE IS NOT GREATER;' language surely, which admits of the most perfect *equality of greatness*, between the *party sent*, and the *party sending*; and which countenances, in no respect, the inference of the slightest inferiority.

Besides, we have the matter established, beyond all controversy, in the following attested fact. In the book of the Acts, we are distinctly informed, that 'the apostles, who were at Jerusalem, SENT '*Peter* and *John* to Samaria[2].' Will it be contended, that *Peter* and *John* were '*subordinate*' and '*inferior*' to the other members of the apostolic college? I believe not; nay, this very passage is of itself sufficient to destroy not merely the inference of '*subordination*' in the *party sent*, but the silly belief of the Romanist, who boasts of *St Peter's supremacy* over the twelve. In short, experience amply justifies me in maintaining, that this

[1] St John xiii. 16. [2] Acts viii. 14.

'*œconomical*' mode of explication of the terms, '*God*,' '*Father*,' &c. when restricted to *One* of the *Three* in Jehovah, and not extended to '*Jehovah* '*Aleim*' in general, that is, to the 'ALL IN ALL,' of whom St Paul speaks, is admirably adapted for removing many of the difficulties, with which, it is asserted, that the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity is beset, and for dispelling that gloom of prejudice which has, in all ages of the church, more or less over-clouded one of the most essential articles of the christian faith.

Let any man of common honesty and candour make but trial of the plan of explication, which the 'Divine Œconomy" affords, (making choice of the scriptures of the New Testament, where it is alleged that the doctrine of a Trinity is most clearly revealed, as the field of trial), and, if he will only conduct the experiment, without paying any regard to the words *inserted* by our translators, and printed generally in the Italic character[1], I pledge myself, that he shall experience the justice of my observation, and rise from the task with a conviction, that no method of explication, equally satisfactory, has ever yet been discovered.

One or two instances only I shall now adduce, to

[1] In proof of the necessity of this caution, see Col. i. 19. where the translators have inserted the word '*Father*.' "It pleased *the Father*, 'that in him should all fulness dwell.' In ch. ii. v. 9. this is rectified, '*In him* dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'

to give the reader an idea of the superiority of this mode over every other. 'This is life eternal,' asserts our Saviour, 'that they might know Thee, 'JEHOVAH, *the only true* ALEIM, and Jesus Christ, 'whom *Thou* JEHOVAH ALEIM, hast sent[1].' How does this simple elucidation cut up the misapplication of these words, so common to all the *Anti-Trinitarian* tribes. 'There are,' exclaims St Paul, '*Gods* many, and *Lords* many, but to us *One God* '(Jehovah) the Father, and *One Lord* (Adoni) Je-'sus Christ[2].' These two passages speak for themselves, while the light thus opened up to the reader's view, will direct him completely, *how* to apply *these*, and every other similar passage, with which the Scriptures abound.

[1] St John xvii. 3. [2] 1 Cor. viii. 6.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

THAT I may not appear too sanguine of success, even with the youthful theologian, I am ready to acknowledge, that any appearance of deviation from what is currently received as the standard of orthodoxy—established by authority, and confirmed by long use—is a formidable objection to the plan, which I have taken up so much of the reader's time in enforcing. On this account, in addition to the charges already foreseen, and, I humbly trust, already obviated, I shall be accused of interpreting the Scriptures to my own purpose, and in conformity with my own conceit; the common refuge, it will be said, of every heretic. Nay, I shall have it boldly sounded in my ear, that, however plausible my arguments, and the plan of the '*Divine Œconomy*' may be, both are contradicted in all *the Creeds*, and by all *the Liturgies* of the church.

The first part of this charge, I am bold enough to say, will be brought forward with a very bad grace, by any professing to be protestant. For, to '*the law and the testimony*' *only*, according to the

pro-

protestant faith, does an appeal lie, on the subject of heretical doctrine; and, by the 'law and the testimony' *only*, can such doctrine be confuted. I trust, therefore, that claiming the privilege of this *appeal*, and submitting to its award, will have the effect of ridding me of any such accusation as that of interpreting Scripture to suit my own purpose, and in conformity with my own conceit.

As to the other branch of the charge now before us, which would represent my arguments, and the plan of the 'Divine Œconomy,' as contradicted in all the Creeds, and by all the Liturgies of the church, this I must take the liberty of denying. It seldom happens, that the language of the Apostles' Creed is adduced on either side of this controversy. To the language of the Nicene Creed, I trust, I have already given a satisfactory interpretation; in addition to which, it need only be observed, that the mode of expressing the very first article, 'I 'believe in ONE God,' &c. upon which Dr Bull and his followers do build what they term '*Prerogati-* '*vam Patris*,' (the prerogative of the Father) does, by no means, imply any such exclusive idea; provided only, that we allow the compilers to have possessed common sense enough to make their composition consistent with itself. For, in the very next article, they require of christians to express their belief 'in ONE *Lord* Jesus Christ.' Yet, to shew, that by this mode of expression nothing *exclusive* is meant; and to shew that no 'Prerogativa

'Filii'

'Filii' can be, or ought to be built thereon, we have another LORD introduced, viz. 'the Holy Ghost, 'the LORD, and giver of life.' Surely this is enough to satisfy every impartial critic, that the Nicene Fathers *never* meant to countenance, by their use of the word 'ONE,' the conclusion which Dr Bull has so industriously drawn from it. In fact this ancient and venerable composition of theirs is conceived in terms so replete with the distinction betwixt '*nature*' and '*office*,' that I refer it to any one, who attends to this distinction, whether the parts, relating to the Trinity, can either be comprehended, or properly adjusted, without the aid of the 'Divine 'Œconomy,'—of that *Œconomy* to which the Fathers themselves appealed; and without which, neither *orthodoxy*, nor an intelligible meaning can be discovered in this valuable production of antiquity.

With respect to what is supposed to be found in the Liturgies, as contradicting the plan of doctrine which I have laid down, I have no objection to be judged by the Liturgy of the English church; that Liturgy which, in common with the church, whose unworthy servant I am, I do most cordially receive, and which, for a period of fifty years and upwards, I have daily used, with the most sincere regard. But so far is the English Liturgy from countenancing any sort of opposition to my arguments, and to the grand scheme of the 'Divine Œcono-'my,' that, upon due investigation, it will be found, that this liturgy can neither be fully understood,

nor

nor consistently used, in all its forms, without our bearing in mind, as we go along, something of what the Scripture hath taught us respecting the plan of this Divine Œconomy.

As our public prayers are of more obvious importance, than even our public creeds, let me explain myself by a reference to them. I begin with the *pattern*, the *foundation*, and I may add, the very *warrant* of prayer, viz. the form taught to his disciples by Christ himself. The object of this sublime composition, I hope I am justified in terming 'JEHOVAH ALEIM,' the *Unity* in *Trinity*, addressed under the endearing appellation of '*Our Father*, 'which art in heaven.' In exact conformity, therefore, with our blessed Saviour's model, we are taught to commence our humble 'confession,' by addressing this our 'Almighty and most merciful 'Father,' in the full extent of '*Jehovah Aleim*,' and not as either *personally*, or essentially restricted to *One*, to the *first* in the triune nature; which would indeed be nothing less than direct Arianism.

The next part of our admirable church service, which offers itself to our consideration, is that most comprehensive compilation known by the appropriate name of "*The Litany*." Here, in the introductory invocations, the '*œconomical plan*' not only appears, but, in some measure, may be said to force itself on our immediate notice. The first invocation points directly to my view of the sub-

" O God the Father, of heaven "—not ' *Father of* ' *heaven*,' surely, ' per *essentiam*,' but ' *per œconomi-* ' *am* ; " *O Thou, (in) Jehovah*, who, as *one of the* " *Aleim*, hast *assumed* the character of *Father*, and " hast thus undertaken to sustain the *Pondus Deita-* " *tis*, have mercy," &c. The second invocation, " *O God the Son*, Redeemer of the world," &c. seems to bear a shadow of reference to that ' *paternity* ' and ' *filiation*,' of which certain theologians affect the discovery. It is however a shadow *only* ; for the real import of the church's language does neither require such reference, nor even admit of it. Here the particular share of *office* is specified. The epithet SON points at once to the *incarnation*, which the writers, above alluded to, acknowledge to be the grand object of the ' Divine Œconomy.' Wherefore the meaning here must be, " O Thou (in) *Je-* " *hovah*, who, as *one of the Aleim*, hast *actually* (in " consequence of previous concert) become SON " for the redemption of the world, have mercy," &c. The third invocation, " O God the Holy " Ghost, *proceeding* from the *Father* and the *Son*," &c. must, notwithstanding the insertion of the word ' *proceeding*,' to be consistent with the meaning of the other two, bear the same interpretation. This term ' *proceeding*,' in the creed ascribed to Athanasius, seems, I must acknowledge, to refer to ' *es-* ' *sence*.' Its language is, ' neither *made*, nor *created*, ' nor *begotten*, but PROCEEDING.' And certainly to the adoption of the term, if taken in the *scriptural* and *active* sense—' The Spirit of truth, which *pro-*

' *ceedeth*,

'*ceedeth*,' εκπορευεται, that is, '*cometh out* from the '*Father*[1],' &c. I can have no objection. For bearing thus the idea of *volition*, or of some *voluntary egress*, not applicable to, nor admissible in *essence*, the term is clearly *official*. Aware in some respect of this, and quibbling with the word 'πνευμα—*spirit*,' the advocates of the doctrine of '*Generation in the* '*Son*,' have applied to the Holy Ghost a word also of *passive* signification; this is the word 'SPIRA-'TION; and as to the propriety of its application, I leave those writers who do apply the term, to settle that point; acknowledging that I am utterly incapable of discovering it. In my estimation, and in the *scriptural sense* of the term 'PROCEEDING,' every thing is as it ought to be. 'O Thou, (in) Jehovah, 'who, as *one of the Aleim*, dost voluntarily *proceed*, '(that is, dost *come forth*) to sanctify, by thy *essential* 'and inherent holiness, and, in thy assumed charac-'ter of *the Spirit*, to *inspire* and direct the redeem-'ed of Christ—have mercy,' &c.

The *fourth*, and, as we may call it, *consolidating invocation*, has in it no one obstacle whatever to the œconomical plan—"O holy, blessed, and glori-"ous TRINITY, *three persons*—ALEIM, and *one God* "JEHOVAH—have mercy, &c.

[1] St John xv. 26. The addition '*Filioque*,' *and the Son*, has never been received in the Eastern church; but, in consequence of its having been long received by the Western church, I mean not to dispute the propriety of it.

The application of the same key of interpretation to all the '*Collects*' is equally convenient for opening up to us the proper meaning of them; and some of them, it will be found on trial, do necessarily require its application. I shall instance only in one, the collect appointed to be used on the first Sunday after Easter. "Almighty *Father*, who "hast given thine only *Son* to *die* for our sins," &c. Surely no one will interpret this language, as meant of the *eternal* Son of the *eternal* Father—the usual language of the espousers of the Son's *subordination*. He only, the Almighty *Father*, *by œconomy*, gave the *Son*, by the same *œconomy*, *to die*, &c. Wherefore since the Divine Œconomy must be, in this instance, resorted to; why not in every other instance, where the language of the Collect is equally susceptible of it, and rendered so clearly intelligible by it?

The Eucharistical part of our liturgy is that, however, on which I might wholly rest the defence of this plan of interpretation. It has been said, I know, (but said without a shadow of foundation) 'that the prayers at the altar are to be addres-'sed to the person of the *Father only*.' To protract the present discussion by any systematic refutation of this opinion, would be absurd; I proceed therefore to direct your attention to the exhortation in the Communion Office. Here we are distinctly called upon, "to give most humble and hearty "thanks to God, the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy* "*Ghost*;"

" *Ghost*;" not as being '*Jehovah*,' but as being '*Aleim*' " for the redemption of the world by the " death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both " God (Alue) and man," &c. I will ask whether this very clause of the Eucharistic exhortation can be properly understood, without the aid of the *Divine* ŒCONOMY? Nay, to shew that the whole efficacy of the sacramental institution of the Lord's Supper depends *to us* upon the 'ŒCONOMY,' that is, on '*Jehovah* being 'ALEIM'— we call this bounden duty and service, '*Our sacrifice* of praise 'and thanksgiving[1].'

If it shall be objected against my plan of interpretation, that there is a rubrical direction to omit, on Trinity Sunday, the words 'Holy Father,' in the Preface—'It is meet and right,' &c.: Yet it should be remembered, that this is the only objection; and, to shew that it militates not to any great extent against myo pinion, I need but produce the antecedent declaration, 'that we should *at all times*' (as well as on the particular festival of Trinity Sunday) 'give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Almighty and ever-'lasting God—evermore praising thee, and saying, '*Holy, Holy, Holy—Aleim, Jehovah, Sabaoth*, hea-'ven and earth are full of THY glory[2].' Let it be also

[1] See the conclusion of the Consecration Prayer, in the Scotch Communion Office, and first prayer in the Post Communion of the English Office.

[2] See Isaiah vi. 3. in the original.

also remarked, that the proper preface for Trinity Sunday is decidedly hostile to the doctrine of *generation*, of *subordination*, or of *difference*, be that difference what it may, among the persons of the Holy Trinity: 'For that which we believe of 'the glory of the *Father*, the *same we believe* of the '*Son*, and of the Holy Ghost, without any DIF-'FERENCE OR INEQUALITY.'

When all these things are duly weighed, I cannot but conclude, that the plan of interpretation afforded by a uniform appeal to the '*Divine Œco-'nomy*,' would prove highly beneficial to us, in either using, or perusing the book of Common Prayer, as well as in perusing the book of God; since it would keep the *Holy Spirit* ever in our minds, even when not conjoined, by name, with the other two, (as in most of the Collects he is not) and would thus have the effect of silencing the clamours of the Socinian tribe on this head; a matter, which the current notions of a '*Fons Deitatis*,' of a '*Prærogativa Patris*,' and the like, have not yet, in the common acceptation, been able to effect.

It is in this, that Mr Whiston, and the fraternity to which he belongs, have so mightily triumphed, that none of the scriptural doxologies[1] *name* the Holy Ghost; and that in the early ages of christianity,

[1] Let the reader consult St Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. and these, without the aid of 1 St John v. 7. afford at least a *legal* confutation of Mr Whiston's cause of triumph; for, by the "*mouth*" of these "*two*" *passages, the* contrary is "*established.*"

nity, no personal addresses are ever made to him. Surely some of the ancient liturgies afford proof positive of the contrary, as Mr Whiston well knew, from the use which he occasionally made of them, when seeming to favour his own views. But laying them aside, I would introduce to the reader's notice an old and curious tract, entitled 'The 'Acts of Paul and Thecla.' It was first published in Greek, by the laborious Dr Grabe, in the first volume of his 'Spicilegia,' from a manuscript in the Bodleian library; and is, by its learned editor, thought to have been the work of a presbyter of Asia, early in the second century. With this little tract Mr Whiston is highly offended; a circumcumstance which serves, in my opinion, greatly to enhance its value; not that I deem it an authentic work, but that its antiquity, and its conformity with the sentiments and expressions of the earliest ages of christianity seem to me to be unquestionable. In the Greek original, there are numerous expressions of high respect bestowed on Christ, and he is throughout treated with deserved dignity. In the Latin version, however, of which the precise date cannot be ascertained, (otherwise than by the fact about to be noticed), these dignified expressions are changed into some indifferent and very general appellations. The intention is obvious, and will discover itself to any one who will take the trouble of comparing the Latin copy with the Greek original. The passage which has proved so galling to Mr Whiston, is that in which Thecla is introduced expressing

pressing herself thus—'μακαριοι 'οι τον βαπτισμα καθαρον 'τηρησαντες, 'οτι αυτοι αναπαυσονται προς τον πατερα, και τον 'υιον, 'και το 'αγιον πνευμα'—'*Blessed are they, who keep their 'baptism pure, for they shall rest with the Father, with 'the Son, and with the Holy Ghost.*' Mark the Latin copy: 'Quia ipsi refrigerabuntur, apud Pa-'trem et filium charissimum'—'*For they shall be re-'freshed with the Father, and his most dear Son,*' no mention being made of the *Holy Ghost* at all. The like equality of reverence paid to the Holy Ghost, is found also toward the conclusion of the tract—'ὁτι σε φιλω, και σε ποθω, και σοι προσκυνω, τω πατρι, και 'τω 'υιω, και τω πνευματι 'αγιω, εις τους αιωνας'—'*I love 'thee, I desire thee, I worship thee, Father, Son, and 'Holy Ghost, for ever.*' And again, in the very conclusion—'εις δοξαν τϑ πατρος, τϑ 'υιϑ, και τϑ πνευματος 'αγιου'—*to the glory of the Father, the Son, and the 'Holy Ghost.*' All this the Latin version withholds, together with the history of Thecla's escape, by a rock rending to receive her, from the attack of those who intended to violate her person. Viewing this escape as rather fabulous, Dr Grabe himself ascribes the conclusion of the tract to some posterior writer. But as this part of the history contains nothing more marvellous, than what the body of the work had previously detailed, and as the learned Doctor justly thought, that the recovery of this interesting little tract was an acquisition to the christian antiquary, he had, in my opinion, done better not to have lessened its usefulness, by calling in question the story told in the conclusion; thus, by means

means of a little hypercriticism, setting aside the noble attestations to the Deity of the Holy Ghost, which the conclusion of the work is stored with. It is solely with a view to these attestations, that I have troubled the reader with the above discussion; and whatever may be his sentiments on the subject, he will, I am sure, give me credit for the motives which led me to state my opinion thus briefly respecting the triumph of the Socinian—that in the early ages no addresses are personally made to the Holy Ghost, *as God*.

I have now, I may say, disposed of the most material points which have offered themselves to my mind, regarding the important christian doctrine of the '*holy and undivided Trinity;*' a doctrine which has been so wantonly attacked by one set of writers, and, in my estimation, so feebly defended by another. The only apology which I have to plead for having dwelt so long upon this branch of theological science, is, that none other has a claim to equal regard; the doctrine of a 'Trinity in Unity,' being *essential* to the right apprehension of every other christian doctrine, and *necessarily* to be maintained, to the right discharge of every christian duty. Besides, its having occupied so much of the space, allotted to this work, has been in a great measure owing to the extreme arduousness of the undertaking, and to the necessity, imposed upon me, of clearing my way as I proceeded, even at the expence of tediously repeating, over and over again, the same observation.

Before, however, I can yet conclude, there are two imputations, which possibly some may think I have incurred, and which it is natural for me to be most anxious to guard against. First, it may be imputed to me, as nothing short of a high crime and misdemeanour, that I have arrogantly presumed to make free with *Fathers*, *Bishops*, *Doctors*, and *Dignitaries*; and, though confessedly in a humble state of obscurity, have set myself in opposition to men deservedly placed in a state of ecclesiastical and theological *eminence*. It strikes me, that in some part of his learned labours, Lord Bacon talks of 'THE IDOLATRY OF GREAT NAMES,' as inimical to the investigation of truth: while, like other idols, experience tells me, that 'great names' have jarred, and may continue to jar with each other, and sometimes with themselves. To this imputation if the public shall be disposed to attach any odium, it becomes me to attempt no farther vindication of myself, than simply to say, in the language of the trite Latin adage, "saepe etiam est *olitor* verba op-" portuna locutus."

The second imputation is of more weight. It derives its origin from the strong predilection in favour of what is called '*the doctrine of the Divine Mo-*' *narchy*,' first taught by St Athanasius; and, under the sanction of his great name, still vigorously maintained. Of this doctrine the great Dr Bull is so extremely fond, that he affirms, 'the *subordina-*' *tion* of the Son to the Father, as to his origination

' and

'and principiation, is *altogether* necessary to be 'known, and believed, that by this means the 'Godhead of the Son might be so asserted, as 'the *Unity* of God nevertheless, and the DIVINE 'MONARCHY, might still be preserved inviolate.' To combat this bold '*champion*,' in the very field, where the mastery has been for many years assigned to him, is surely a perilous attempt, in a theological '*stripling*' like me. But having already advanced to meet him, in the '*armour*' of Scripture, which all parties *acknowledge* to be *impregnable*, I am in no fear about the issue of the present contest.

The *Divine* MONARCHY of the great JEHOVAH, (in the strictest sense which the term will bear) I do most firmly believe and adore. But the MONARCHY of ONE in JEHOVAH, having the other TWO in *subordination*, and in *subjection*, admitting that these *two* are also *Jehovah*, (which must be Dr Bull's meaning, if he has any meaning), is a doctrine to which *nullus magister*, *no great name*, *no human authority*, can ever induce me to subscribe; not only by reason of its having no foundation whatever in the word of God, but of the dangerous conclusions flowing from such unfounded premises. Will it be believed, however, that all further reasoning against such premises is on my part rendered unnecessary, from the admission of no less a theologian than Dr *Waterland*; as contained in his "Importance of "the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity asserted"—against Episcopius, Curcellæus, and others, who,

taking part with the followers of Socinus, had adopted a different opinion? In this work, the learned author, after giving us a long quotation from Dr Sherlock, in which we may observe honourable mention of the Holy Ghost's '*peculiar office in the œconomy of man's salvation*,' proceeds to make the following observations, which I will transcribe at full length, as completely pertinent to the discussion in hand.

'I believe I might appeal to the consciences of 'these gentlemen, whether their gratitude to *Christ*, 'for what he has done and suffered for us, be not in 'a manner lost, and swallowed up in their regards to 'the *Father*, for commanding and accepting it; and 'whether the notion of the grace of the *Holy Spirit* 'be not entirely absorbed in the thoughts of the su-'perior assistance of God. The effect is natural, and 'I judge in this case, by what I should find in my-'self. Upon their hypothesis—'the grace of our 'Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the 'communion of the Holy Ghost,' will amount only 'to the *love of the Father thrice told*, which super-'sedes both the other. And when it is said, that 'the *Father* and *Son* will make their abode with 'us,' and that 'the *Holy Ghost* also will abide 'with us for ever'—the two *creatures* superadded to 'the *Creator*' (in other words, the two *subordinates* added to the *supreme*) 'will appear but as *cyphers*, 'which add nothing to the sum; while in *one* we 'have *all*, and there is nothing but that *one* to be depended

'depended upon. His presence alone will supply 'every thing, and his lustre will so far eclipse *both* 'the *other persons*, that it will be hard to say, upon 'the *hypothesis* I am mentioning, *what occasion there* 'would be for them, or what comfort in them. Such 'is the appearing change made in the very form 'and essence of christianity, by these *new* doctrines, 'that it seems *to lose the very soul and life* of it, and 'by degrees to *degenerate* into little else but a better 'kind of *Judaism*, retaining the *name of christianity*, '*but giving up the main things*[1].'

These very pointed observations, (how consistent with some parts of Dr Waterland's own creed, concerns not me), I do sincerely adopt; and shall only follow them up, by asking this plain question, 'Whether a doctrine possessing the tendency a-'gainst which Dr Waterland, in the above passage, 'is so zealous to guard us, be not a DANGEROUS 'DOCTRINE?' Should this be granted me, it would not be an easy matter, I think, to deny the consequence, that fixing a DIVINE MONARCHY in ONE, and ascribing to the other TWO a NECESSARY SUBORDINATION, is a doctrine possessing this *tendency*, and therefore, by all the rules of logic, is a DANGEROUS DOCTRINE.

This is the ground on which, in the preceding letters, I have uniformly proceeded. It was the very stumbling

[1] See Importance, p. 64.

stumbling block, which, at an early period of my theological studies, overwhelmed me with doubt and difficulty. Having experienced its danger, I became solicitous to guard the theological student against its adoption; and have, in my humble opinion, established a plan fully adequate to the maintenance of the strictest orthodoxy, yet freeing the important doctrine of a Trinity in Unity from every unfavourable consequence, which the insidious critic can deduce from it. I conclude in the words of Dr Waterland: 'I can see no probable reason, why 'the honour of *creating* should be principally a-'scribed to the FIRST, and the honour of *redemption*, 'as considerable as creation, to the SECOND, and the 'honour of *illumination, sanctification,* and *miraculous* '*gifts*, to the THIRD, which are as considerable as 'any thing before: I say, I can see *no probable rea-*'*son for these things*, (when the FATHER, as it should 'seem, might as well have had THE SOLE HONOUR 'OF ALL), but upon the hypothesis which *I* have 'hinted'.'

TO JEHOVAH ALEIM BE EQUAL GLORY.

[1] See Importance, &c. p. 66.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

NEXT in order to the *nature* and *essence* of the great JEHOVAH, falls to be discussed the *nature* of his creature MAN. And here, as in the discussion which has just occupied our thoughts, the christian relies on the account, which revelation gives, and on that alone, for the origin of this material system, and of mankind in general, as descended from that first pair, whom the Creator formed for his own gracious purposes of love and mercy; placing them in a delightful spot, adapted in every way for religious contemplation, upon such terms of duty and dependence, as were suited to the faculties wherewith they were formed, and proper for their happy situation. These terms, revelation proceeds to acquaint us, our first parents transgressed, by yielding to the temptation of an apostate angel, who had rebelled against his Creator. By this transgression, which they might unquestionably have avoided, they deprived themselves of their Maker's love and favour, and instantly incurred the threatened penalty of his justice. This early

early act of flagrant disobedience, which is commonly called '*The Fall of Man*,' produced a woeful change in his original *nature* and *condition*; his *nature* being thereby infected with guilt and pollution, and his *condition* altered from *happiness* and *peace*, to *wrath* and *misery*. And as, according to the christian's belief, all mankind are descended from Adam and Eve, posterior to the period of this lamented change, it must follow of course, that all mankind do partake of that *guilt*, and are infected with that *pollution*, which they, our original progenitors, had contracted; insomuch, that it is this *hereditary* guilt and pollution, to which christian language has affixed the name of 'ORIGINAL SIN.'

This being the case, by '*original sin*' nothing less can be understood, than some degree of *innate* depravity, some *defect* in our nature, even from the womb, which renders us, *naturally*, disinclined to good, and unworthy of the divine acceptance. Nay, if not removed and taken away, revelation distinctly tells us, that this very *defect*, or *taint*, (call it which you will), must deprive us of the happiness which we aspire after; and if, as in the revealed account, there be no medium between *happiness* and *misery*, must expose us to *misery*—in other words, to the punishment due to sin.

It is well known what controversy the doctrine of 'original sin' has for ages excited in the christian world—how subtilely it was combated by *Pelagius*,

lagius, and his followers, and how ably it was defended by *Augustine*, *Jerom*, *Prosper*, and others. I mean not to deny, but that the heat of debate has, in this instance, as in numberless others, produced unguarded expressions, even on the part of the defenders of the doctrine. These expressions, having given offence to pious minds, have had the effect of stigmatizing this important article of our belief, as maintaining what appears to be extremely hard, if not unjust, the devoting infants, for instance, to that damnation which, it is acknowledged, wilful sin deserves, but which is avowedly their misfortune, and not their fault. Were we to enquire minutely into the justice of this charge, we should find that it is more or less owing to the sense commonly assigned to the Latin term '*peccatum*—*sin*,' as if it necessarily implied *actual*, *wilful*, and *deliberate* transgression. Whereas we know, that the radical and primary meaning of the terms used in the Greek and Hebrew scriptures, ('ἁμαρτανω' in Greek, 'חטא' in Hebrew), is to 'ERR,'—'TO BE OUT OF THE WAY,'—'TO MISS THE MARK;' or, as St Paul most accurately defines it, 'all have '*sinned*, and COME SHORT of the glory of God'.' It is also observable, that where the inspired writers, in both Testaments, intend to speak of what we understand by *transgression*, or *actual sin*, they use other words of more determinate signification, as will be acknowledged by all who are in the least

[1] Rom. iii. 23.

acquainted with the original style of holy writ. What therefore Scripture declares, and experience hourly proves, it is certainly most reasonable for us to believe, viz. that there is, in human nature, as derived from the corrupted nature of Adam, *even now*, 'a *mistake*,' '*a coming short*,' '*a missing of the* '*mark*'[1];' nay even a *hereditary vitiosity*, which, whether denominated 'SIN' or not, is undoubtedly 'ORIGINAL,' since 'death' is the 'wages of it;' and *that* must be '*original*,' or '*from the source*,' which affects the whole *race* or *offspring*. Nor is our temporal dissolution the only effect (tho' the only visible effect) of this *contagion*; it prevents our being entitled to, or fit for, the glorious immortality, which we are taught to believe is prepared for us: since 'without *holiness* no man can see the Lord[2].'

Self-love may flatter, and philosophy may magnify the dignity of human nature, and the vast extent of man's reasoning faculty. Yet it must be confessed, because sensibly felt by every honest man, whether Christian or Deist, that in the very zenith of its self-exaltation, there is a deviation from the line of complete rectitude, something which the most vain-glorious could wish not to be, something which is unworthy of being displayed before

[1] St Paul talks (Phil. iii. 14.) of "pressing toward the mark," &c. but if we consult the context, we shall find, that it was "not having "his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ," &c.

[2] Heb. xii. 14.

before the eye of pure and perfect Deity, something, in short, which may be said to produce, *involuntarily*, some such exclamation as that of St Paul, when he is about to conclude his reasoning on this degrading subject—'O wretched man that I am, 'who shall deliver me from the body of this death[1]?' It is rather an unusual mode of maintaining any position; but so it is, that, in my opinion, we need seek no fuller proof of the original corruption of human nature, than the very attempts that have been made to deny it, and the eagerness displayed in suggesting but a doubt regarding it.

Upon this woeful change, in Adam's nature and condition, as affecting himself *immediately*, and, as consequentially affecting all his descendants, there followed, by a revealed decree, an alteration in the terms on which, in his state of original innocence, Man had stood with his great Creator; and a new plan of divine love was discovered to him. Hitherto the connection had been between a *Creator*, and a *highly favoured creature*, between a *parent* and a *dutiful child*, between a *king* and an *obedient subject*. But upon the fall, and in consequence of that fatal event, this happy connection (of the duration of which we are wholly ignorant) was totally dissolved; and now, the case stood as between a *Creator* and an *offending creature*, between a *King* and a *rebel*, between *God* and a *sinner*. Here was a dread-

[1] Rom. vii. 24.

ful, and, by human means, *irreconcileable* breach, which, if not happily closed, must have brought ruin and misery to the wretched offender for ever. On the one part, *atonement* became indispensable; on the other part, *forgiveness*. Yet, as the offender could make no *atonement*, so neither could the offended *forgive* without it. In this deplorable state, deplorable indeed beyond conception to the miserable delinquent, trembling at the bar of unrelenting justice, the mercy of *Jehovah* proposed, and his infinite wisdom provided, a remedy; the singular efficacy of which consists in this, that *justice* is completely satisfied, *mercy* is nobly exalted, and *wisdom* adorably displayed. To the poor penitent offenders a promise was intimated of a deliverance to be wrought for them and their race, by ONE, described under what may be termed, the family character of the '*seed of the woman*;' which promise was renewed to patriarchs and prophets in after times; and thus was the comfortable prospect of a full accomplishment preserved, until the time when the '*seed*' did come, (of whom, and to whom, the promise was made), and that '*seed*' is '*Christ*[1].'

Much has been said, and much has been written, on the subject of *covenants* between *God* and *man*. The two covenants—of *works* before the fall, and of *grace* after it, have long constituted a sort of standard

[1] Gal. iii. 16.

dard language. I readily admit the soundness of the doctrine in the sense which is *intended* to be expressed. But I forbear to adopt the language, as, in my opinion, improper and inadequate. The word COVENANT, in its general acceptation, implies a *pact* or *agreement* between parties held to be on a footing of *equality*; which therefore cannot subsist where there is, on the one side—*superiority*, on the other—*inferiority*, as is confessedly the case between *God* and *man*, in whatever view we behold man—whether as in a state of *primæval* innocence, or of *adventitious* transgression. Besides, I look upon this mode of expression, as seeming to bestow on man a share of merit in devising the glorious scheme of his redemption. This the sound christian can in nowise admit, as he believes that man's only share in this stupendous transaction was, humbly and thankfully to accept in *faith*, what in *mercy* was graciously and freely offered to him.

But what still further justifies and confirms my scruple regarding the propriety of the received language of '*the two covenants*,' is my discovering no foundation for it in Scripture, when Scripture is duly examined, and the whole scope of it attended to. We do indeed frequently meet with the word *covenant* in Scripture. But so far is the context from establishing any thing like '*a covenant of works before the fall*,' that the first mention made of the term is on the occasion of God's threatening to bring a *flood of waters* upon the earth to destroy all flesh,

flesh[1], &c. It is afterwards repeated, in a way which challenges it, as God's *exclusive* property, 'I will establish MY covenant[2],' &c. language which must imply that it was God's *sole act and deed;* not, as at this time commenced, but as being of antecedent standing, and *now*, by solemn promise, *ratified, established,* and *conveyed,* in all its beneficial efficacy, to man. In this view God himself terms it 'the *everlasting covenant*[3];' in reference to which, St Paul is found to use the same language—attributing 'blood' to the '*everlasting covenant,*' as Moses had done before[4]. It was no doubt this application of *blood* to the term '*covenant,*' which suggested to the learned divines, who affixed the marginal references to our English bibles, the propriety of referring the reader, from the words of Moses, to those of St Peter, where he writes of 'the 'sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ[5].'' What is this, if it be not to indicate that the '*covenant*' denoted '*Christ?*' How else shall we understand the following mysterious language of *Jehovah,* the 'Almighty God,' 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in 'their generations, for *an everlasting covenant*—to be 'a GOD unto thee, and thy seed after thee[6], if we do not understand it in the sense to which the apostle

[1] Gen. vi. 17, 18. [2] Gen. ix. 11.
[3] Gen. ix. 16. See also Heb. xiii. 20, 21. Gen. xvii. 7. Isaiah lv. 3.
[4] Exod. xxiv. 8. [5] 1 St Peter i. 2.
[6] Gen. xvii. 7.

postle gives us the key, when he writes of 'the 'church of God—which he has purchased *with his* '*own blood*?' and therefore in the sense to which our Saviour himself points, at the institution of the holy eucharist, as related by his evangelists St. Matthew and St Mark—'τουτο εστι το αιμα μου—το της 'καινης διαθηκης,' '*this is the blood of me—that of the* '*new testament*[1].'

It is unquestionably true, that for man's behoof some act or deed of love and grace was very early provided. This, laying aside the evidence of the Old Testament, is frequently and emphatically taught us by St Paul, under the significant appellation of the '*divine purpose*[2].' Nay, he actually denominates it '*the eternal purpose*[3],' similar to the epithet '*everlasting*' *covenant*. Indeed these very epithets '*eternal*' and '*everlasting*,' whether they are understood as importing absolute *eternity* or not, are yet, by the apostle's explication, as contained in that precise declaration of God's *promising* '*eternal life* '*before the worlds began*[4],' sufficient to carry up our ideas of this '*purpose*,' or '*covenant*,' to a date when man could certainly have had no hand in it; and must therefore satisfy us, that something is intended by the word COVENANT, beyond the common meaning affixed to it in modern systems of theology.

For,

[1] St Matth. xxvi. 28. St Mark xv. 24. See Zechar. ix. 11.

[2] Rom. viii. 28. Ephes. i. 9. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9, &c.

[3] Ephes. iii. 11. [4] Titus i. 2.

For, although I am confidently of opinion, that no meaning ascribed to the English term '*covenant*,' is applicable to the Hebrew term בְּרִית, translated *covenant*; which, in conformity with its derivation, must denote some sort of '*purification*[1]'; nor necessarily included in the Greek term 'διαθηκη,' which properly signifies 'the act of disponing,' in our language understood by the word '*disposition*[2],' yet do I most cordially and thankfully embrace the belief of a '*covenant*,' an '*everlasting covenant*,' (a διαθηκη αιωνιος—*a disposition in our favour before the world began*), a concert, pact, or agreement, not WITH, but FOR man, graciously entered into by the adorable THREE in JEHOVAH, in order to man's *original* formation, and (should circumstances require) in order to his *provisional* redemption. For this purpose, as I have already shewn[3], did the adorable *Three* clothe themselves with the characteristic appellation 'אֱלֹהִים—ALEIM,' *engagers, covenanters by oath*; while, as I have also shewn[4], it is no small satisfaction to us, in our belief of this pre-eminent article of our faith, as being at least a presumptive proof of the antiquity of it, that we find the gentile world carrying it off by tradition, and apply-

[1] The word is in this sense translated '*soap*' in two places, Jerem. ii. 22. and Mal. iii. 2. where the context would not admit *covenant*.

[2] It is in this sense most pertinently applied by St. Paul, Heb. ix. 16, 17. to what we call '*testamenting*,' which is the gratuitous deed of one, and very different from '*covenant*,' which is the mutual and joint act of more than one.

3 See Letter XVII. p. 180. 181. 4 See Letter XX. p. 215.

applying it in the formation of their 'vanities.' This appears little short of certain, from the systems of theology invented by the Greeks and Romans, and so much the study of *christians* in these latter days, the first of whom had their 'Ζευς ορκιος,' their 'SWORN GOD,' and the other their 'Jupiter 'Fœderator,' that is, 'COVENANTING JOVE,' (or *Jehovah*). It is impossible to ascribe the invention of the epithets 'ορκιος' and 'fœderator,' to the wildness of heathen superstition, or to the suggestions of a bewildered imagination. They are epithets which are deservedly esteemed, as *remnants* of prior discovery, if not deserving of a higher character. I have not pretended, neither do I pretend to give a *proper description*; no, nor so much as to entertain what human wisdom denominates *a clear conception* of this amazing instance of divine condescension; but from the scriptural representation of it, so analogous to the creed, though beyond reach of the comprehension of the disciple of Jesus, I persuade myself that the devout reader, when he comes to meditate deeply upon the 'LORD OUR 'GOD'—'JEHOVAH OUR ALEIM,' will see and admire the fund of comfort which this, the distinguishing name of the true God, affords; and will be ready to join with the venerable Tertullian, in the following rapturous conclusion: 'Felices, 'qui *Deum jurantem* habemus; infelices qui *jurato* 'Deo non credimus'—'How happy are we, who 'have GOD SWEARING to us; how unhappy, if we 'believe not even a SWORN GOD[1].'

[1] Heb. vi. 13—19.

LETTER XXIII.

AS it is to the 'one Christ, very God, and 'very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, 'and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to 'be a sacrifice not only for *original guilt*, but also 'for *actual sins*[1], that we are indebted for our faith and hope as christians; so is it to the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who is of one substance, glory, and majesty, with the Father and the Son, 'very and eternal God, without any difference or 'inequality[2],' that we owe the regeneration of our natures, and the sanctification of our souls; and, by him, that we are enabled still to say, 'that Jesus is the Lord[3].' His office is to 'shed 'abroad diversities of gifts through the *church*, 'and to divide them severally to every one, as he 'himself willeth[4];' from on high enduing us with power to every *good word* and *work*, and to run our chris-

[1] See Article II. of the Church of England.

[2] See Article V. [3] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

[4] 1 Cor. xii. 4—11. Heb. ii. 4.

christian race, not only with patience, but even with joy [1].

The term 'CHURCH,' which our Saviour himself introduced in a very solemn manner [2], is of most extensive signification, and is used, in various senses, even by the inspired writers. In the theological acceptation, now to be treated of, it is a term which may be applied in general *to all who are purchased with the blood of Christ, who are called by his word, and who, by these means, are put in the way of being saved by his merits.* These are very properly denominated the CHURCH OF CHRIST. In the more precise and definitive sense of the term, it may be said to import *a regular and compacted society; founded by the Redeemer of mankind upon the* 'ROCK' *of his own promises; directed and ruled by laws of his own enacting; entitled to sacramental privileges of his own institution; governed by officers of his own positive appointment—and that, in a continued succession to the end of the world; whereby they become internally united, in the necessary communion of* 'one 'Lord, one faith, and one baptism.' In short, to define the terms still more briefly, *the church is a mystical body, connected with, and depending upon Christ, as its great and glorious Head, for care and protection, for government and discipline; for nourishment in grace here, and for advancement in glory hereafter.*

[1] Rom. xiv. 17. Gal. v. 22. 1 Thess. i. 6.

[2] St. Matt. xvi. 18.

In this light, and from this sanctifying connection, the '*Church*' is acknowledged in all our creeds, to be '*holy*,' by being called with an *holy calling*, and by being solemnly *separated from* the world (as the name 'εκκλησια' bears) to God, by having the instituted means of grace and *holiness* committed to its administrations, by its sworn engagements of obedience to the *holy* precepts delivered to it; and especially by the operations of the *Spirit* of *holiness*, promised to all within its pale; and which operations will ever be effectual in those who are willing to comply with, and be wrought upon by them. It is on all these accounts, that we acknowledge the *church* of *Christ* to be, in general, *a holy* society, viz. with respect to the *Author*, to the *end*, *to* the *institutions* and *administrations* of it; but with peculiar respect to the *individuals* who compose the church, who are under an obligation to be *holy* here, in order that they may constitute a society, *perfectly* and *completely holy* hereafter.

The '*church* of *Christ*' is also acknowledged to be '*catholic*;' not confined to one nation, as was the Jewish church, but *universal*, as being, by the appointment and command of Christ, and by the efficacy of his assisting power, intended for all nations, and for containing (as worthy of being extended to all places, and of being propagated in all ages) *every truth* necessary to be known on the subject of our eternal salvation; furnished at the same time with power to exact unlimited obedience

ence to all the commands of its glorious Head, and dispense all graces requisite for making the persons of christians acceptable, and their actions well-pleasing in the sight of God.

This *church* of Christ, thus declared to be a *holy* and *catholic* society, is acknowledged by every well informed member of it, to have powers deposited in it by its sovereign Institutor, and by him entrusted, with its regular governors and office-bearers, for the maintenance of the true faith 'once delivered to the saints;' for the admission of members into this the mystical body of their Lord; for the exclusion of heinous and contumacious offenders; for absolving, in their master's name and authority, returning and submissive penitents; for ordaining '*decent*' and '*orderly*' rites and ceremonies; and, in general, for establishing, for preserving, and for renewing, *unity*, and *peace*, and *harmony*, and *good order*, among persons of all ranks and conditions, professing themselves 'members of Christ, and 'children of God:' provided always, that what is positively commanded, or expressly forbidden in the word of God, be in nowise intringed, or matters merely *circumstantial* and *ornamental*, put on the same footing of conscience-binding observance, with matters of *essential* and *fundamental* obligation.

Yet these, according to the opinion of many calling themselves christians, 'are *hard sayings*—

who

'who can hear them?' The consequence has been, that no one article of the Christian faith has excited greater controversy than this very article—'*Of the* CHURCH.' One thing, however, this controversy seems to proclaim, as undeniably certain, viz. that in proportion to the keenness displayed by the several claimants to the title of 'THE TRUE 'CHURCH,' in the same proportion ought we to estimate the value and importance which attach themselves to the possession of a privilege, so inestimable as that which this title, when *justly due*, must convey.

A distinction is commonly made between the VISIBLE church, and the INVISIBLE, which however, upon examination, will appear to be of no material consequence. The *promises of Christ* are confessedly made to a *visible* society; and whatever *invisible* blessings 'the author and giver of every good and 'perfect gift' may be pleased to confer upon it, *in general*, or upon any of its *individual* members, it is still in the character of a *visible* church, and in our character as *visibly* connected with it, that we are to consider the nature of our relation to it. It is indeed to be feared, that the loud boastings of many, with regard to the church's *invisibility*, is no better than an enthusiastical pretext for discarding all respect for apostolical *order* and *decency*, and for throwing off that wholesome discipline, which the *visible* church must occasionally exercise, or cease to exist as a society. One thing is indisputable, that

that every privilege and advantage, *real* or *imaginary*, which belongs to the *invisible* church, may be enjoyed in that which is *visible*, with this additional advantage on the part of the latter, that, besides the *general promises* of its divine Founder, the *visible* church has the benefit of his *particular institutions*, as working their designed effect, in perfecting the gracious scheme of man's salvation.

There is another distinction made use of in discussing the article of '*the* CHURCH,' when this blessed society is characterized by the terms '*militant*' and '*triumphant*'—'militant here on earth,' triumphant in heaven. The first of these epithets I hold to be strictly proper. The second merits no such commendation, by reason of its expressing more than scripture warrants; and of its being, on this account, attended with certain difficulties, in my idea, not easily surmounted.

That the church upon earth is in a *militant* state, is the acknowledged language of revelation. 'Put 'on the whole *armour* of God,' exhorts St Paul, 'that ye may be able to *stand against* the wiles of 'the devil[1],' &c. In conformity with which exhortation, every member admitted into the church by baptism is, by that admission, taken bound to 'confess the faith of Christ crucified, and *manfully* 'to *fight* under his *banner*, against sin, the world, 'and

[1] Ephes. vi. 11—18.

'and the *devil*, and to continue Christ's faithful '*soldier* and servant unto his life's end'.' But how the saints departed, in whatever state or condition they be, whether in heaven or not, can be justly called the 'CHURCH TRIUMPHANT,' I am at a loss to discover, so long as their bodies, which bore a part in the christian warfare, are laid in the dust; under Christ's protection, I readily admit; but still under the dominion of 'the *last* enemy, that shall 'be destroyed;' and so long as the great 'captain 'of their salvation' himself, cannot, strictly speaking, be said to be fully and completely '*triumph*-'*ant*,' until 'he hath' *actually* 'put all enemies un-'der his feet.'

I am aware that this may be deemed a point of speculation merely. Still however, as it may be, and, as I am convinced, it has been productive of some unseemly consequences, I feel it to be my duty to guard the inexperienced theologian against a hasty admission of the doctrine, which represents one part of the *church* as triumphant, the other *militant*. For what was it but this unscriptural distinction which introduced into the Romish church one of the most impious of her corruptions? Was it not the doctrine, 'that the saints, reigning to-'gether with Christ, are to be venerated, and *invoked*, or *prayed to*?' a species of idolatry, which had never been thought of, had there not been, by reason

[1] See Office of Baptism, in the book of Common Prayer.

son of the belief of a '*Church triumphant in heaven*,' an opinion formed, that, *being in heaven*, the saints were of course invested with power to receive the invocations of the church '*militant here on earth*,' and to grant its members the wished-for aid.

But, after all, these constitute only what may be thought trivial points of dispute on the subject of the *church*. There are other two points which, as their importance is greater, have been more violently agitated, insomuch that not only divisions, but open ruptures have been the consequence. It is well known, that the pre-eminent title, 'HEAD OF THE CHURCH,' has been, for a long period, assumed by one particular bishop, the bishop of Rome; and *that*, in due succession from one possessor of the Roman See to another. Nor has their claim of universal sovereignty been confined to things *spiritual*. They have not blushed to claim a sovereignty in things *temporal*. Nay, to such a height has their ambition been carried, in *both* respects, as to make it necessary for other churches, first, to insist on an abatement of their demands, and finally to rid themselves altogether of such intolerable dominion.

It is no part of my present design to enter on a subject so voluminous as that of the Pope's supremacy; a subject which has been so often, and so fully discussed, upon the authority of *scripture*, of *antiquity*, and of *common sense*, as to leave pro-

testants at no loss whatever on this point, to give a reason, to every one that asketh, of the hope that is in them. I only therefore observe, in passing, that the distinguishing the *mystical body* of Christ, by the title of 'THE CATHOLIC CHURCH,' is sufficient of itself to point out the arrogance of any *created* being, whether *man* or *angel*, assuming to himself the *incommunicable* prerogative of being 'HEAD *over all things to the Church*;' a title which an apostle restricts to Christ himself[a].'

The other much agitated point, which may be considered as a natural appendage of the Roman Pontiff's unwarrantable sovereignty, is his pretended *infallibility* even in matters of faith. This is the weapon which, whether used for attack or for defence, is of all others the most skilfully wielded by the Romanist, who never fails to upbraid his adversary with the want of an *infallible* guide, and consequently with the want of that unerring direction, in which they who are blessed with such a guide may safely rely. Yet it is worthy of observation, that Romanists themselves are not agreed, how or where even they, who are blest with such a *guide*, are to find this infallibility of direction, whether in the person of their Pope singly, in or out of his infallible chair; or in a General Council, with or without the Pope (for there have been General Councils that have censured, and even

[a] Ephes. i. 22. v. 23.

even deposed Popes), or in the whole body of the Catholic church, collectively or diffusively.

These hypotheses, different and contradictory as they confessedly are, have been severally defended with much vehemence, and no small shew of learning. Nay, each of them has been broken down into so many subtle questions, and enveloped in such a cloud of scholastic intricacy, as would require a *prior infallibility* on our part, to find out the seat of that, of which the Romanist boasts, and where it is to be met with. In reproaching us with the want of an infallible guide, he betrays only his own ignorance of sound protestant principles. He who is really 'Head over all things to his 'church, which is his body,' is assuredly a guide, *divinely infallible*: and he has promised to be with his church, (*collectively* in the members of it—*individually* in its governors), and *that* for the purpose of *guidance* and *direction*, as well as for the purpose of *defence* and *protection*, for no shorter period, than to the very *end of the world*[1]. True it is, that, in his *human* nature, he is now absent from this his body, for 'a little while;' but in his *divine* nature, he both can be, and is present, for every one of the purposes just mentioned.

The necessity of a *visible* guide, of which the Romanist talks so freely, is but a vain pretext;

 since

[1] St Matth. xxvii. 20.

since no such guide can possibly exist. For to whom is their *infallible* guide visible? Not to the whole catholic church, nor even to all the Romish communion. He must transmit his directions from Rome, or from the particular spot of his limited residence, through the medium of his legates and nuncios, to all the distant churches which depend upon him. And may not the *invisible* head of the church, by means of those who are 'ambassadors' for him, and 'stewards of the mysteries of God,' do the same? It is no answer to say, that *impostors* may pretend that they have an *embassy* from Christ; since the same pretence may be made to a *deputation* from the Pope. In the latter case then, the church is equally liable to imposition as in the former; and it is *private judgement* properly directed, that must, in such cases, detect the imposture.

But, not to prosecute the subject farther, as, on investigation, there is no certainty to be met with in the Romish dogma of infallibility, nor any benefit to be reaped from it, was its existence really ascertained, it is better for us to trust to the only *Guide*, who can be properly said to be INFALLIBLE, even to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who can, and who will illuminate the understandings, and direct the judgements of those vicegerents of his own divine appointment, who, in the exercise of their spiritual authority, have no other object in view, but the glory of God, and the good of souls. It therefore becomes us, and all who name the

the name of Christ, to depart from every other species of *infallibility*, but that which rests *essentially* in him, as our glorious Head; and which is obtained *derivatively* from him by his church; and *through* the *church*, by its various members. For this INFALLIBILITY *alone* is to our edification, being dealt out in such portions, and communications, as He, who is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' sees fit for maintaining that unity of order, and purity of faith, which God, who cannot lie, has been pleased to ordain, as generally necessary to salvation; and having so ordained, to require at the hands of those who *act in his name, having been sent for that purpose, as Christ vouchsafed to send his apostles.*

LET-

LETTER XXIV.

HAVING in the preceding Letter defined the meaning of the term 'CHURCH,' and disposed of the distinctions which have been drawn between the '*church visible*,' and '*church invisible*,' between the '*church militant*,' and the '*church triumphant*,' with the claims, which have been arrogantly instituted for ecclesiastical '*sovereignty*,' and '*infallible*' *guidance*, I come now to discuss the important doctrine of the CHURCH'S UNITY. For, although diffused over all the world, still is the church 'ONE,' in the strictest sense of the term. As originally instituted at Jerusalem, the church was confessedly *One*. And even when multiplied into many particular churches, by reason of the increase of believers, still did it continue *One*, built upon one and the *same foundation*, restricted to the *same doctrine*, placed under *the same form of government*, partaking of the *same sacraments*, performing the *same devotions*, and expecting the *same salvation*.

These were the ingredients, at first necessary, for composing the UNITY of the holy catholic church; and

and they remain the necessary ingredients to this very hour. That which has but ONE *head*, can be but ONE *body*, though composed of many members. That which has but ONE *foundation*, can be but ONE *building*, though laid out into many apartments; and where any of these original constituents of catholic unity, which Christ and his apostles have so carefully established, and fervently enjoined, are wantonly and wilfully infringed, thro' that factious spirit which is ever ready to cause divisions and offences, there must take place a *breach* in the *building*, a *wound* in the body, which if not closed up and healed, must be attended with sad and deplorable effects upon those whose act and deed such infringement *originally* was; and on those also, by whose wilful act and deed such infringement continues to exist. For this it is which constitutes the dangerous sin, and woeful state of 'SCHISM; against which the apostles of our Lord so pathetically warn us—which, in the purest ages of christianity, the primitive Fathers so bitterly lament, and which we ourselves publicly pray to be delivered from, as being one of the most formidable evils, which can assail us, no less than our being CUT OFF (as the word radically imports) from the *Body of Christ*, and, by this means, deprived of all communion or connection with him the HEAD, with him 'from whom the whole body *fitly joined* 'together, and compacted by that which every 'joint supplieth, according to the effectual working

'in

'the measure of every part, maketh increase of the 'body, unto the edifying of itself in love [1].'

By *schism*, therefore, the body is completely *luxated* or *disjointed*; the benefits, of which the apostle speaks, are completely destroyed; consequently the pestilence itself is not more to be shunned and avoided than '*schism*,' under whatever guise it may appear, lest, as was threatened to the Israelitish church, we be consumed in the sins of those who '*perish* thus in the gainsaying of Corah [2].' For *salvation*, of a truth, belongs to the members of the ONE, *holy*, *catholic* church ('against which the 'gates of hell shall not prevail') if not by *exclusive charter*, yet upon the following *firm assurance*, that 'there is no other name, under heaven given a-'mong men, whereby we can be saved, but the 'name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth [3].' 'For *who-'soever* shall call upon the name of the Lord shall 'be saved;' provided always, that, as the apostle argues, they believe on *him*, on whom they *call*; a matter which, according to his reasoning, they cannot do, without the aid of a *preacher*; who, WITHOUT BEING SENT [4], is equally inadequate to the office of *preaching*, as they are inadequate, without him, to the *work of their salvation*.

It deserves to be taken notice of, that, while our Saviour

[1] Ephes. iv. 16. [2] Numb. xvi. Jude 11.
[3] Acts iv. 12. [4] Rom. x. 13, 14, 15.

Saviour was yet in a body of flesh, and sojourned here below, he speaks of his *church*, as what *was to be* instituted at some future period. His words are, 'I *will* build my church[1]'. But, when he had 'ascended on high, and led captivity captive—he '*gave gifts* unto men;' among which the institution of the 'CHURCH' must be numbered, since the author of the Acts of the Apostles explicitly informs us, that, after the memorable day of Pentecost, on which the twelve, being 'all with *one* 'accord in *one* place, were filled with the Holy 'Ghost'—the Lord *added to the church* daily such 'as should be saved[2].'

As additions of this sort were enlarged, we read of *churches*, in the plural number—the *churches* of God, the *churches* of the Gentiles, the *churches* of Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, &c.; and of the *church* in the singular number, when cities are spoken of—as the *church* in Jerusalem, in Rome, in Corinth, Ephesus, Smyrna, &c. For, although distributed in these populous cities, and in the adjacent territory, into many particular congregations, yet were these christians placed under the care and inspection of one single governor, who was early denominated the *Bishop* of such a place, having inferior officers under him, to assist him in the great work of the ministry. And, as a number of such congregations, when under the superintendence

[1] St Matth. xvi. 18. [2] Acts ii. 47.

dence of *one* bishop, was reckoned *one* particular and local church, with respect to this *one* bishop; so all the local churches of all the cities, of all the provinces, and of all the nations of the world, come under the denomination of the ONE CATHOLIC CHURCH, in relation to the ONE Supreme Governor of them all, who is Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

That some time would elapse before *churches* thus constituted, and thus distributed, could be brought under a regular system, is not to be doubted. But that the systematic plan of settlement, which the apostles acted upon, was, as above described, we have as complete evidence as the directions which Scripture contains, and the early and genuine records of the fact itself, can well be thought capable of affording us.

On this footing then, the supreme government of the christian church, as a society, stood vested in Christ alone; and by him was it delegated, under the express assurance of his continued presence, to the apostles, and their regular successors, the several bishops of the several particular churches which the apostles planted, all of whom possessed an equal share of such delegated power, authority, and jurisdiction, without the least pre-eminence, or inherent superiority among them. For, as *brethren*, they were all equally honoured, by having the same commission imparted to them; for the due

due discharge of which, they were all, in the first instance, equally amenable to Christ, and in the second, by mutual consent, amenable to each other. Thus was the church governed, the gospel preached, nations converted, and the purity of the faith maintained, under all the opposition, which persecution from without, and corruption from within, could throw in its way. And thus did matters go on for some more than three hundred years, until that the civil powers becoming christian, and the bishops of the church meeting with the countenance and favour of the state, ambition and worldly-mindedness began to exhibit the influence which they had obtained; an influence, which in the end produced the most fatal effects.

With the purest intention, and for *order's* sake, the general Council of Nice did introduce into the church the new title of PATRIARCH; which title the Council bestowed upon the following bishops; viz. those of *Rome*, *Constantinople*, *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, and *Jerusalem*. Of these *five*, the first two—the bishops of Rome and of Constantinople, soon conceived a jealousy of each other, by reason of the *temporal* dignity of their respective Sees, Rome *having been* the imperial city, and Constantinople, *now enjoying* imperial honours. Upon this pretext, added to others equally frivolous, did the churches of *Rome* and *Constantinople* continue at open warfare for six or seven hundred years; until at length a formal and final separation was declared, which his-

torians have termed the *Great Schism* between the Eastern, or Greek church, and the Western, or Latin church; and which is kept up with unabated zeal to this very day. The title of POPE, it is well known, was originally a title bestowed on all bishops, especially on such as were of great age, or of long standing in the church. Yet this title did the bishop of Rome exclusively assume, in order to preserve the claim of supremacy, which his undue ambition led him to found upon some imaginary privileges bestowed on the apostle St Peter; and that he might more successfully propagate the vain conceit, that he is St Peter's immediate successor, who is asserted to have been bishop of Rome, but for which assertion, (notwithstanding the unwieldy fabric raised upon it), there is no better foundation than a disputable sort of tradition.

In virtue however of his unsupported and unwarrantable powers, as *universal Bishop*, the Pope and his adherents condemn all who dissent from the Romish church, (the British churches among the rest), and stigmatize them as schismatics from the *holy catholic church*, because they refuse obedience to the Pope, its universal bishop. On their premises, the conclusion is undeniable. But we reject their premises, as self-assumed; and therefore are in nowise affected by the conclusion. It is true, that a schism has now for a considerable time subsisted between the church of Rome and the episcopal churches of England and Scotland. This

is

is no less matter of fact, than it is matter of lamentation. When they of the Romish persuasion state the fact, however, they charge this *schism*, as wilful, to our account: in our statement of it, we think ourselves justified in charging it to their account, who *constrained* us to separate from them. For according to the definition which I have given of primitive *catholicism*, and to which they cannot reasonably object, it is apparent, that at the period of the separation complained of, the church of Rome had openly and judicially departed from the old established standards, and principles of the *catholic church* in the first and purest ages.

In proof of this, let it be remembered, that the Romish pretensions had shaken the very foundation of the christian church; and by building on another foundation than that which an apostle had declared to have been laid[1], had put the person of *St Peter* in the place of our Lord Jesus Christ; the catholic faith had become vitiated by the intermixture of new and unscriptural doctrines; the instituted form of government, by a conjunct episcopate, had been changed into the despotic tyranny of *One* individual; the sacraments of Christ's appointment had been profaned, by the advancement, to the same rank of dignity and honour, of other *five* of human institution, as well as mutilated by withholding the eucharistic cup from the laity; the purity

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 11.

purity of public worship, as well as of private devotion, had been adulterated with impure, and unwarrantable addresses to creatures; and, upon the only hope of salvation annexed, by the gospel, to the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and to the merits of his intercession, had been superinduced hopes new and fallacious, annexed to the names and intercession of particular saints, and to the unscriptural doctrine of *supererogation*: While not satisfied with practising these unjustifiable deviations from the primitive standard, the church of Rome did not cease, in consequence of the universal dominion claimed by her, (against which claim the sister churches of this Island did ever strenuously contend), continually and indefatigably to endeavour, by the terror of spiritual anathemas, and by the most torturing corporal punishment, to wreath the yoke of subjugation around the necks of every individual church in Christendom. These are facts, stubborn facts, detailed in the history of every European nation, and protestants have repeatedly and fully urged them, by proofs and arguments which never can be refuted; insomuch that our separation from a part of the catholic church, so imperious and so polluted as is the Romish church, being founded on truly catholic principles, cannot, with any shadow of propriety, be included under the obnoxious term 'SCHISM.' Indeed from the danger, as well as from the imputation of that dreadful evil, we are warranted in believing ourselves completely safe. We have merely resumed the original rights of dependence

dence upon Christ, as the supreme Head of his own mystical body, and of independence on *every other* church, whose title to pre-eminence is no better than our own. On these rights did the catholic church of Christ in general, and the several particular churches of which it stood composed, found the code of discipline which 'decency and order' required. We have merely re-adopted the instituted form of ecclesiastical polity by bishops, *collegiate* in power, as to *general* government, but of *individual* authority, in the diocese or district committed to their charge: and we have most becomingly returned to the pure standard of catholic faith and doctrine, which Christ delivered, and his apostles taught; in our recovery of which we esteem ourselves peculiarly happy, hoping (as we do both fervently hope and pray) that our present pure standard of faith and doctrine, may be preserved to us, and that it may please the gracious 'author of 'every good and perfect gift,' not 'to remove our 'candlestick out of its place[z].' For, though by a course of licentious indifference, or of national apostacy, some particular churches may provoke *him*, 'who has the keys of hell and of death,' to inflict upon them *this* the extremity of temporal chastisement, yet the 'church catholic' standeth sure; 'a-'gainst it the gates of hell shall not prevail:' so that still Christ will have a church upon earth; still there will exist a kingdom of willing subjects to him,

[z] Rev. ii. 5.

him in the day of his mediatorial power, and until the final consummation of all things.

In the sure faith of this the Catholic church is, and ought to be acknowledged indefectible in *point of duration;* although, in the latter days, even the church catholic may, by reason of infidelity and lukewarmness, be brought within the narrowest compass possible, in terms of our blessed Lord's prophetic interrogatory, 'When the Son of Man 'cometh, shall he find faith on the earth'[1]?' But this indefectibility is, on no pretence whatever, to be restricted to any particular church, how splendid soever its present establishment may be—not even to the church of Rome itself, which, in days of other years, boasted of its splendour and extent, as marks of its *infallibility*, and thought it no shame to claim a monopoly of princely favour as its especial prerogative.

The Romanist would do well to remember, that other churches, while they stood, appeared to be *indefectible;* and might have pled this *appearance*, in support of the same claim which the church of Rome urges even now. It is peculiarly incumbent on her members to bear in mind the necessary caution which the truly primitive church of Rome received from the pen of the great apostle of the Gentiles—'Boast not against the branches; thou 'bearest not the root, but the root thee: be not 'high-

[1] St Luke xviij. 8.

'high-minded, but fear, lest, if God spared not the 'natural branches, he also spare not thee[1].' It is plain, that the church of Rome is here, by an inspired apostle, simply denominated a '*branch* of 'the *wild olive* grafted in,' among other branches, into the root of the *true olive*, and therefore no less *defectible*, no less in danger of being *broken off*, than the *natural branches* originally were. What presumption then is it, in this polluted *branch* of the church catholic, to pretend to restrict the all-nourishing *root* from resuming those *branches*, viz. the churches of Jerusalem, and of Antioch, which, with many others in those regions, were *engrafted* before itself; although it is presumptuously believed, that they were lopped off, that the church of Rome might stand alone. True, they have been long deprived of outward pomp and splendour, and do groan under the burden of heathen oppression. But does the church of Rome forget, that it was for a time similarly oppressed? It must be so; otherwise we shall find it impossible to account for this church unkindly and unreasonably rejecting the churches, above noticed, from *being* parts, or, upon her principles, *from ever having been* parts of the catholic church of Christ.

This hasty conclusion is certainly worthy of the severest reprehension; since it is drawn from premises which are, on catholic principles, wholly inadmissible,

[1] Rom. xi. 17—21.

admissible, viz. *worldly poverty and paucity of numbers*—objects of reproach these, which perhaps are more applicable to our Lord himself, and his apostolic mission, than to any church now existing in the christian world. Nay, is the Romanist aware, that in many of these poor and uncountenanced churches, that of Constantinople for instance, where something worse, if possible, than Paganism reigns triumphant, there may after all be found 'as 'many great, as many noble, as many wise men 'after the flesh,' professing christianity, as were to be found in Rome, when St Paul wrote his affectionate Epistle to the christians there, or when *he preached to them in his own hired house*, for the space of two whole years. Indeed, if external splendour and opulence shall be thought necessary to the constitution of a church (an opinion too prevalent, alas! with many), who knows, but that the inscrutable will of him, 'who has all power in heaven 'and in earth,' may, in his own good time, restore the oppressed churches of the East to the flourishing state which, once on a day, they are known to have enjoyed, and reduce the mighty and hitherto prosperous Patriarch of the West to *their* present low and despicable condition. 'Let him who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.'

LET-

LETTER XXV.

FROM discussing the *unity*, and *indefectibility* of the holy catholic church, the transition to the discussion of *that*, by which we become entitled to the precious privileges of being members of Christ's mystical body, is natural and easy. If the church of Christ be '*One*,' as well as holy and catholic, (and to evince this *unity* was the design of the preceding Letter), then it follows, by the clearest deduction, that, being once admitted into the church by baptism, we must continue in its holy communion and fellowship, and strictly adhere to the '*Unity*,' of this our Lord's mystical body; since such steady adherence is expressly required of us in Scripture, and is clearly sanctioned, by 'antiquity, universality, and consent,' the *semper, ubique*, et *ab omnibus*; for which all the learned champions of the christian faith do most earnestly contend, as affording proofs of both doctrine and fact, of the most irrefragable nature.

But, in order to obtain the blessed effects of this

holy communion and fellowship, it is no less obvious that, as individuals, we must be members of, and *united* with, some particular local church, *national, provincial,* or *diocesan,* that is, we must belong to some regular branch of the *One,* catholic church; in which we must carefully *abide,* as a *branch* abideth in the *vine,* and must conscientiously attach ourselves to its communion, during every external change of adventitious circumstances, and notwithstanding all opposition and temptation whatsoever; with this single exception, that this particular local church become neither heretical in its doctrine, nor corrupted in its worship, so as to render its communion sinful, and a separation from it both lawful and necessary.

In such a melancholy case, the pious christian has only to submit himself to the wise providence of his infallible and invisible Guide, humbly and stedfastly depending upon his merciful care to take pity on the lamentable situation of his church, and in his own time and way, to reform and regulate whatever is wrong and defective about it. But, on no pretext whatever, is even the most learned or most devout private christian, to go beyond his own proper sphere, as a *lay member* of the church catholic, and seek a supply of his spiritual wants by sacrilegiously assuming to himself, or by countenancing others in assuming, the instituted office of ministring in holy things, of which office 'no man 'can take the honour to himself, unless he be call-

'ed

'ed to it of God, as was Aaron[1].' He ought always to remember the admonition of Samuel to Saul in a similar case, that where both cannot be done, 'to obey is better than sacrifice[2].'

While, on the other hand, where no such case does occur, where the particular church, within whose jurisdiction his lot has fallen, neither alters the faith, nor adulterates the worship of God, by indefensible additions, and profane mixtures, no private christian ought to quarrel with such salutary injunctions and prohibitions, as his ecclesiastical superiors shall from time to time deem proper and seasonable, for supporting discipline, and for maintaining the *unity* of faith, and that 'decency' and 'order' which an apostle recommends. But, on the contrary, so long as these objects are kept in view, so long as both *faith* and *worship* are thus kept pure and unsullied; and so long as *discipline* is regulated by charity, and not exercised to sinister purposes, so long ought the *prohibitions* and *injunctions* of church governors to be not merely acquiesced in, but enforced, by the private christian, whenever and wherever opportunity may serve. To act otherwise is to be guilty of disobedience to *spiritual* authority, which (seeing that both *church* and *state* are composed of the same individual members) is equally obligatory as *civil* authority is in things indifferent, being only a *terror* to evil doers, but for

[1] Heb. v. 4. [2] 1 Sam. xv. 22.

for the *praise* of them that do well. Indeed, where the least act of *spiritual* disobedience is cherished, it is 'as when one letteth out water,' and before he is aware, it may overwhelm him in the monstrous and devouring gulph of *schism*, that is, of formal, and wilful separation, from a blameless communion, and, by consequence, from the true 'church of 'Christ, which is his body, the fullness of him that 'filleth all in all.'

I am aware that such doctrines are not only, now-a-days, lightly regarded, but are even branded with the terrifying names of *bigotry*, *intolerance*, and *illiberality*. Nay, after having exhausted the vocabulary of *railing*, the latitudinarian professor of christianity thinks no farther *reasoning* on the subject necessary, than to put to the orthodox churchman the following trite question, 'If grace and 'salvation are only to be had within the pale of 'catholic communion, what shall become of the 'many nations, who have never heard of the ca-'tholic church, nor even of the gospel of salvation 'itself?' I am none of those who feel insensible to the force of this question. On the contrary, I respect the scruples, which it has, on many occasions, been found to raise in pious minds. But let it not be too triumphantly viewed either by the *modern philosopher*, or the *modern sectary*. It is a question which does admit of a very satisfactory answer; and by such answer, the pious mind may be relieved of all its doubts and all its difficulties, while the

the *philosophic*, and *sectarian* scoffer is effectually confuted.

In any view which I can take of the question, it appears to be improperly conceived; and would seem to convey a suspicion of a defect in the divine goodness, in not having communicated unto all nations alike, that knowledge which is necessary to salvation. Whereas I believe, (and I think upon infallible grounds), that this is by no means the case; but that the gospel of salvation has been notified, in the way which seemed good to its divine author, to every nation under heaven. Sure I am, that St Paul, having put the question, 'have *they* (that 'is both Jew and Greek) NOT *heard?*' decides in the affirmative, when he replies, '*Yes, verily, their* '*sound went into all the earth, and their words unto* '*the ends of the world*[1].' I know that this latitude of expression, which the apostle borrows from the psalmist[2], has been artfully brought down to a more confined interpretation; but, I appeal to the most learned theologian, whether I am not warranted to apply the passage, in the literal and comprehensive sense, in which *one* inspired writer delivered it, and in which *another* did certainly use it. Wherefore if there are either nations, or provinces, either individuals, or communities, which have rejected the gospel, when, by the dispensation of

[1] Rom. x. 18. [2] Psalm xix. 4.

of providence regularly preached to them; or, if there are any such, who, having received the glad tidings of salvation themselves, have not taken due care to transmit, on the original plan, these glad tidings to their posterity, I should wish that the philosophical, or sectarian caviller would point out what it is that he would have had the author of our salvation to do with such nations, provinces, individuals, or communities, as *once* had the faithful sayings of the gospel regularly offered to them for 'acceptation?' Whether he ought still to be, *miraculously* (as it were) *forcing* his means of grace and salvation, from time to time, upon them; or not rather leave them to the consequence of their progenitors unbelief *now*, but at the disposal of God's infinite wisdom, justice, and mercy, *hereafter*.

I must be permitted to say, that if those who take such an interest in the discussion of the above question, respecting the nations now in a state of pagan idolatry, had but an equal interest in working out their own salvation, which they are called upon to work out with '*fear* and *trembling*', they would find little leisure for such vain speculations. 'Lord, what shall this man do?' was a question of equal propriety, and of equal importance. When however it was put to our Lord by one of his 'familiar friends, in whom he trusted,' the answer given shewed at once the light in which the blessed Jesus viewed it—'If I will, that he tarry till I come, 'what

'what is that to thee? *follow thou me*'.' If we only substitute those, who are without the pale of Christ's mystical body, and who have never heard whether there be any Saviour of the human race, for the beloved disciple, respecting whom St Peter put the question, and ask, 'Lord, what shall the *heathen* do? 'what shall finally be their lot?' the answer is equally explicit—'What is that to you? if I *will*, 'that they tarry in their present state, till I come 'again to judgement, what is that to you? *follow* '*me*.'

Nay, if all other solutions should fail, there is one solution, in which we may with safety rest, and with which, in modesty, we ought to be satisfied. 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do 'right?' exclaimed the faithful Abraham, in a like distressful case. That there is *no salvation* promised to any human being, *except in and through the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, is the express declaration of Scripture. Nor have *we* any other creed. Indeed it is that brief summary, which the sound christian never can depart from believing in his heart, and from openly professing with his mouth. But how the efficacious virtue of that saving name *may be* applied, is part of God's unsearchable riches; with which, *not being revealed*, we have no immediate concern; by our minutest scrutiny, we never

 can

[1] St John xix. 21, 22.

discover it, unless we had the means of viewing the incalculable number of effects produced by the '*great mystery of godliness*—God manifest in the 'flesh,' towards the satisfying of distributive justice, and the displaying of undeserved mercy. And therefore, in answer to the bullying challenge of the *liberal-minded* (but at heart *free-thinking*) tribe, 'dare *any one* take upon him to *damn* all the *moral* 'and *virtuous* men, who have either never heard of 'the *name* of Jesus; or whose faith was not strict-'ly according to the system commonly reputed '*orthodox?*' I may, and I do, with equal decency and propriety, require, in terms of a similar challenge, 'dare *any man, who acknowledges the authenti-'city of Scripture,* take upon him to pronounce such '*moral* and *virtuous* men, as are here described, to be '*safe,* and *secure* of eternal life, without the *name* 'of Jesus?'

The other point, closely connected as it is with the above, is equally conclusive; for, if '*one* faith' be thus generally necessary to salvation, so is '*one* baptism;' insomuch, that whoever does, whether collectively or individually, alter the primitive faith, on the one hand, or *break off from the primitive* institution of the christian priesthood, that is, from *the apostolical constitution* of the *one* catholic church, on the other hand, that man does of a truth renounce the sure and certain title to the salvation promised to *that* faith, and to be claimed only in *that* holy communion and fellowship.

I am abundantly sensible that, in the present posture of christianity, to enter into a more enlarged discussion of this matter, would be deemed, to say the least, a most invidious conduct; such as would of necessity bring upon me the imputation of UNCHURCHING a valuable portion of the *reformed* professors of christianity abroad; who, having recovered the *primitive* faith, lament 'the *unavoidable misfortune*' (according to their own language) of their not being able to recover, to the full extent of their wishes, the primitive government of the christian church.

As my present purpose is not to *attack*, but to *defend*; not to combat the principles of others, but to illustrate those of the venerable branch of the church catholic existing in this country, and thus to edify the clerical candidate, I shall not examine the merits of the above imputation, or of the premises whose offspring it is. I shall only, in sympathy to the objects of it, wish and pray that their '*unavoidable misfortune*' may be sustained at the judgment-day, and that their purity of faith, and sincerity of intention, may compensate for the involuntary breach of *that* which the catholic church, in the day of its acknowledged adherence to the primitive standard, did believe to be of positive and perpetual institution; and which, I hope and trust the catholic church, to this hour, treats with the same pious veneration.

With respect however to things at home, no such plea is advanced, and therefore no such sympathy is, on catholic principles, admissible. In Scotland the breach was not involuntary, it was a matter of choice, and the continuance of it exists, and is occasioned by any other cause than that of '*unavoidable necessity.*' In this country the primitive government of the church by Bishops, who, in a due and regular succession, had been both canonically and legally appointed to bear rule, was thrown aside; at first, under the pretext of its 'being repugnant to the word of God,' (a repugnancy which the foreign reformers never did discover), and afterwards, under the artful disguise, that it was 'grievous to the people, and contrary to their inclinations.' This it was, although neither true in fact, nor conclusive in argument, which did the business, and obtained for what is termed *Presbytery* its present legal establishment. To debate therefore that important article of our faith, which involves the right government of the christian church with our own countrymen, I judge to be completely '*lawful,*' was it at present '*expedient.*' But by reason of the many able vindications of primitive truth and order, to which the theological student has access, in the writings of both Scottish and English authors of acknowledged learning [1], I forbear

[1] See Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity. Archbishop Potter on Church Government. Brokesby's History of the Primitive Church, &c. Brett's

forbear to stir up controversy unnecessarily; especially as modern presbyterians seem to have abandoned the old, though most unjustifiable cause of clamour against episcopacy, viz. 'that it is contrary to the word of God;' and are now eager to represent the government of the church, as noway *essential* or fixed, being both discretionary, and subject to alteration, in conformity with the changes and chances of human life, the variations of times, places, and circumstances; or, in still plainer language, in conformity with the ever-varying humour and fancy of the enthusiast, on the one hand, and of the nominal christian, on the other.

Upon this new basis of dissent, the true method of appeal to '*antiquity*, *universality*, and *consent*,' as decisive in matters of fact, is made to give place to the plausible and popular substitute of *charity*, of *candour*, and LIBERAL SENTIMENT, that upstart and usurping phantom, at whose 'dread nod' every thing, which betrays but the appearance of 'conscience towards God,' is rendered ineffectual to every purpose of religious edification and improvement. In concluding this letter, I shall however in so far comply with the prevailing system of the age, as simply to refer the matter, which it is found to contain, to that *spirit of candour* so much boasted of

Brett's Divine Right of Episcopacy. Sclater's Original Draught of the Primitive Church. Bishop Sage's Principles of the Cyprianic age. Vindication of the Principles, &c. Bishop Skinner's Primitive Truth and Order Vindicated.

of and extolled; and let it decide which of the following two hypotheses appears most probable, and consequently most eligible and safe: Whether the hypothesis which holds, that Christ, the acknowledged Head of his extensive family, *the church*, did leave the *ordering*, *constitution*, and *government* of it, to the fluctuating caprice of every age and generation of man; or the hypothesis which holds, that the wisdom and goodness of Christ did authoritatively fix *some certain* and *determinate model*, for perpetual duration, and for universal observance—not to be departed from, without committing an heinous sin, and incurring a manifest danger. Let the most liberal minded only assimilate the government of the church of God to the case of a well-regulated state; let him only allow the divine institutor of the former to have been possessed of equal regard for his disciples, as every wise and discerning earthly potentate would wish to display for his subjects, in instituting a beneficial form of civil polity; and I, for my own part, am ready to submit to his decision.

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

HAVING instituted a church, against which the gates of hell itself are, at no period, so to prevail, as wholly to extinguish it, we are taught to believe, that Jesus Christ admitted into this *mystical body*, and is graciously pleased to retain in it, *members* of all ranks and degrees, and *that*, by certain positive rites, called *Sacraments*. Besides being few in number, these *Sacraments* are easy of observance, and are of most excellent signification. They consist of two only; and are known by the names of BAPTISM, and the SUPPER OF OUR LORD. Resting as they do, upon the immediate authority of Christ himself, we are expressly assured by his evangelist, that the sacraments were consecrated by his powerful blessing; and being set apart for the great purposes of our Redeemer's mercy and goodness, were enjoined to be of perpetual observance, and to be received as ordinances of perpetual efficacy in his church to the end of time. It is with this view, that the christian church does devoutly and thankfully accept and retain them, venerating them not only as peculiar badges of christian profession,

fession, which they certainly are in an eminent degree, but as being the sanctified means of conveying inward and spiritual grace, and as being efficacious pledges to assure us of it, on the express authority of their divine institutor.

The sacraments are therefore believed to be so strictly essential to the very being, much more to the well-being of a church, the relation so close, and the connection so inseparable, that there can be no real church without sacraments, nor real sacraments without a church. The one necessarily includes and requires the other.

But, at the same time, it is carefully to be observed, that although the church catholic, or any particular church may, for the support of order and decency, appoint such rites and ceremonies as, it is to be hoped, will meet with the chearful observance of every sound member of the same; yet neither has the church catholic, nor any particular church, power or authority to increase or diminish the number of sacraments, or to affix the gracious and spiritual effects of sacramental institution to any ordinance of human introduction. On this account it is, that the episcopal churches of England and Scotland do, in their articles, so expressly reject the *five* additional sacraments adopted by the church of Rome; since they are, in no way, to be held as sacraments of the gospel, 'being such 'as have grown, partly of the corrupt following of

'of the apostles, partly are states of life allowed by 'the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of sa-'craments with baptism and the Lord's Supper;' and therefore are not to be put on an equal footing with the two most venerable institutions ordained by Christ himself.

In proof that these sentiments, respecting the necessity of the christian sacraments to the being of of a church, have been in a great measure universally acted upon, I need only remark, that no sect or party, professing itself christian, did ever assume the title of *a Church*, without using something under the name of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper; insomuch, that the sectarian tribe, known by the designation of Quakers, having boldly rejected these two incontestable ordinances of divine institution, does not pretend, or even wish to be called *a church*. In this part of their creed they undoubtedly err with a high hand; yet they have the merit of consistency, in not aiming at a title which they are, by their own confession, precluded from enjoying.

Yet, general as the reception of the christian sacraments has been, the doctrine which flows from their adoption has been exposed to a variety of subtle and intricate questions. Indeed the term *sacrament*, though for ages common in theological language, does by no means appear to be happily applied to the two grand institutions to which it has

been appropriated. SACRAMENT is well known to be a word of Latin derivation. In the sense ascribed to it by heathen authors, it signifies *a military oath.* And, in this very sense of *oath* or *obligation,* many of the Latin Fathers have applied '*sacramentum*' to things of ecclesiastical observance; but which have no relation to the two gospel institutions which have been thus designated. It would seem however, that the authority of this application of the term, by the Latin Fathers, was that, on which the Romish church built their introduction of *other* rites, into the catalogue of *sacraments,* than those of our Saviour's immediate appointment. This may be gathered from the case of *marriage,* one of the five rites, which they have dignified with the title of a *sacrament.* For they pretend, by means of the Vulgate translation of a passage in St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, (which translation the Council of Trent has declared to be authoritative), that the apostle himself countenances their erroneous tenet. In our translation, literally from the Greek, we read the passage, 'This is a great mystery[1].' The Romanist reads, '*This is a great sacrament;*' and strangely argues, that, from the promiscous use of the two words, and from the *sacraments* being currently denominated the *mysteries* of our religion, all *mysteries* ought to be called *sacraments.* Nor should we quarrel with the Romanist on this head, were the

[1] Ephes. v. 32.

the title an empty one only; but, when to any human institution, however sacred and solemn, a title is given, which conveys the idea of an *effectuality of grace*, and *a conveyance of blessing*, the same with what we know to be annexed to *Baptism* and *the Lord's Supper*, and when we are required to view them in the same light, then does our dissent become a matter of duty; as dissenting from what we are certain is contrary to Scripture, was unknown to antiquity, and sanctioned only in dark and corrupt times, more with a view to serve the interests of worldly policy, than the interests of true and undefiled religion.

But there are other two questions which arise naturally out of the general doctrine of the sacraments; and which are so interwoven with each other, that they cannot well be discussed singly: and these questions relate to the necessity of partaking of both the christian sacraments, and to the person at whose hands we ought *properly* to partake, so as to do it efficaciously. On the one hand, the belief of the *absolute* necessity of the sacraments (which appears to be the side of the one question most warranted by holy writ) seems to throw open the *administration* of them to all and sundry; as it will be deemed little short of injustice to man, to make that *absolutely necessary* to salvation which is without his power, and must depend on the will and pleasure of another. On the other hand, the belief of a regularly commissioned admi-

nistrator being essential to the reality of a sacrament, (which appears to be the side of the other question most warranted, both by holy writ and primitive usage), seems to have produced the declaration that the sacraments are only '*generally necessary to salvation*[1],' by which expression however, we are to understand, that they are only *not absolutely* necessary, when they cannot be *regularly* and *duly* partaken of. Both positions have been ably argued, and strenuously maintained by theologians; while *both*, in point of reasoning, are liable to much embarassment and confusion.

To discuss the merits of both, or of the controversy to which they have given birth, would be to fill volumes; since ancients and moderns, Romanists and protestants, have entered the lists on this diffusive subject; and, from their modes of management, (although, *upon the main*, both parties may be free from wilful error), have left the matter in the same state of doubt and difficulty as before. It becomes me therefore simply to observe, and I do it with the utmost deference, that to me the whole of this laboured disputation appears finally to resolve itself into the same dilemma, with the case of the heathen already noticed. In such a case, the same mode of solution becomes applicable to both. For, I trust that it will, on all hands, be acknowledged, that the *constitution* of the *christian church*,

[1] See Church Catechism.

church, and the *institution* of *its sacraments*, do exclusively belong to Christ, and are arbitrarily vested in him; and therefore, both the one and the other we are bound and obliged to receive, in terms of his divine appointment, without drawing consequences; or, by our sagacity, making provision for such difficulties, as are the offspring of the idly curious, and unsettled mind.

One thing will surely be granted, that, however much the *wisdom* of *God incarnate* may see fit, or however much his *mercy* may incline him to relax any precept which we may deem rigorous in his law, it would, on our part, be the most unpardonable presumption, by any prudential gloss or interpretation, to assign to any such precept a meaning contrary to the real intendment of it. It is, therefore upon this principle of implicit submission to our great lawgiver, that, in my estimation, the matter can ever be satisfactorily adjusted. For, as he has *constituted* his church upon a firm and invariable basis, so has he *instituted* sacraments for the *necessary* observance and support of its members, (but whether *absolutely*, or *generally necessary*, whether *necessitate medii*, or *necessitate præcepti*, or under any other nice distinction, is not for us to determine), while he has committed the exclusive administration and dispensation of these necessary institutions to those, whom he has entrusted with the stewardship of his precious mysteries, and with the external government of the household of faith. Indeed it is neither

ther within our province, nor within reach of our faculties, to be deciding peremptorily in, at best, hypothetical cases; which, while they appear difficult, and sadly perplexing to our shallow understandings, are easily adjusted by Almighty power, guided by boundless mercy, and directed by infinite wisdom; being made to work together for the advancement of his own glory, and for the furtherance of God's gracious purposes of love and favour to fallen man.

LETTER XXVII.

HAVING briefly laid before the reader the nature and institution of the sacraments of our religion, in general, I come now to treat of them individually. The sacrament of *Baptism* claims precedence; being the necessary rite of initiation, by which, as by a door of admittance, we enter into the fold of Christ, the society and communion of his flock, and become, in the language of the church, 'members of 'Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the 'kingdom of heaven.' But great as are these privileges

vileges of the baptized 'servant and soldier' of Christ, they do not comprehend the whole benefits of this holy sacrament. It is by baptism duly administered, and faithfully received, that we are *washed* and *purified* from the original pollution of corrupted human nature; that we are solemnly consecrated to be the peculiar property of the holy and undivided Trinity; and are blessed with the first seeds and elements of that progressive sanctification, which, in virtue of Christ's promise to his church, the spirit of holiness, if not openly resisted, and at last totally quenched, will carry on within us, in just proportion to our necessities; and until, in his own good time and manner, he bring us 'unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of 'Christ.'

Of this salutary institution the *matter* or outward and visible sign is *water:* the *form* is 'in' or 'into 'the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of 'the Holy Ghost;' and the *ministring* is committed by its divine Institutor to his apostles, and to their successors in office; with whom, being sent as the Father did send the Son, that Son hath promised, that he will be 'always, even unto the end of the 'world.'

Such being the sacred nature, and manifold blessings of the baptismal sacrament, it will be readily admitted, that young children stand in especial need of obtaining that 'which by nature they

cannot

'cannot have, even to be regenerate, and born 'anew of water, and of the Holy Ghost. That impious cruelty ought therefore to be detested, which would deprive of a privilege so inestimable those whom Christ himself desired his disciples to 'suffer 'to come unto him,' since 'of such is the kingdom 'of heaven[1].' On the contrary, the church catholic judges it to be both highly expedient, and strictly requisite to admit infants to the laver of spiritual washing; not only as being most agreeable to the word of God, but as being expressly ordered in the words of institution, which direct 'all nations' to be admitted to christian baptism; and surely *no nation* exists without a large proportion of children, such as Christ condescended to take up in his arms, to put his hands upon them, and to bless them[2].

As however all the transactions which pass between Christ and his church are mutual, consisting, on his part, of original blessings; on the church's part, of reciprocal duties—it is most reasonable that children (of an age so tender, that they can in nowise consent to their baptismal initiation, having been received on the faith of those who presented them) should, as soon as they have obtained any measure of religious knowledge, be called upon, and have opportunities offered them to express, and publicly declare, in an open and solemn manner, their full consent and agreement to all that was done

[1] *St. Matth.* xix. 14. St Mark x. 13. [2] Matth. xix. 16.

done *to* them, and *for* them, at their baptism—sincerely promising and engaging in their own names, through the daily assistance of promised and expected grace, that they will abide by their holy profession, and, in their several stations, walk as worthy as they possibly can of the distinguished character imparted to them by the sacrament of regeneration.

This it is which the church has thought fit to conjoin with the ancient rite of *confirmation*; at the administration of which, the young christian is called upon to present himself to the Bishop—that, having before him emitted the necessary declaration of his faith, and having undertaken to perform the necessary duties, he may, by solemn imposition of hands, and episcopal benediction, be *authoritatively* recommended to the further guidance of the Holy Spirit, for continual direction and support, in the race that is set before him. This beneficial and apostolic ordinance, our church, as in duty bound, has carefully retained, and regularly calls upon her young members to 'receive the benefit 'of confirmation, by the laying on of the hands of 'the Bishop,' that is, the Bishop of the particular diocese, or district, to which they belong: a benefit which we cannot but think of very great consequence to christians, when we find St Paul, in one of his epistles, mentioning it, next to baptism, among the fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ[1]. But while we embrace this sacred ordi-

[1] Heb. vi. 1, 2.

nance, with appropriate veneration, yet because we see no instituted *matter* peculiar to it, (for the chrism enjoined by the Romanists, and recommended by some protestants, we do not find to have been of apostolic or primitive usage), we therefore do not admit *confirmation* into the class of those real sacraments, distinguished by Christ's own express institution.

The benefits of baptism, and the privileges annexed to it, being so many, and so invaluable, we find it resorted to, with the utmost attachment and regard, by the primitive church, and still respected by all who call themselves christians, with the exception of a few silly fanatics, who, notwithstanding their non-compliance, do yet pretend to supply their want of it with something *inward*, and peculiar to themselves. Indeed the many strange and erroneous notions prevalent, in modern times, on the subject of *baptism*, are a proof, in so far, of the estimation in which it has been held. And, although the generality of christian parents in this country seem to view the administration of it in no other light than as the prescribed form of giving the child a name; yet this very view of the sacrament, diminutive as it undoubtedly is, has, in all probability, proceeded from the belief, that *baptism* was enjoined for the purpose of conferring something upon the child, by way of *title*, something previously unenjoyed, and, properly speaking, not to be enjoyed without it.

The

The origin of this idea is to be traced in the very construction of the word '*baptize.*' It is an expression derived from the Greek verb βαπτω, which signifies not, in the general, '*lavare,*' to *wash,* but, in the restrictive sense, '*tingere,*' to *dip,* to *dye,* to *tinge*—not only (as we would say) to wash out the *old,* but to bring on, as it were, a *new* colour or character. In conformity with this radical meaning of the word, it is not unlikely, that the primitive mode of baptizing, practised by him who bore the name of *Baptist,* and for some time adopted into christian practice, viz. *immersion,* or of dipping the candidate into the water, was considered as most significant of the design, and as giving full scope to the apostle's analogy of 'being buried with Christ 'in baptism'.'

The ancient mode of dipping at baptism has been, for prudential reasons, long since disused. There is, it is true, a set of Independents who do still plead for the indispensible necessity of it, and there have been found some sincere churchmen, who thought the practice worthy of being re-introduced. But they did not certainly advert to this consideration, so material to the cause which they espoused—whether the baptism was performed by immersion singly, without any additional ceremony, or whether the administrator did not apply the water personally to each individual, by the ceremo-

[1] Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12.

ny of sprinkling, or of aspersion. This I do believe, there is good ground for asserting, was the case. Hence it would follow, that the *dipping* was an act of *choice*, while the *sprinkling* was the act of *necessity*.

With respect to the analogy noticed by St Paul, with which the act of *immersion* is supposed to be most conformable, I am led to think, that in no other way ought this opinion to be coincided with, but by having an eye to the Jewish custom prevalent in the time of St Paul, of letting the body down into sepulchral vaults, or hollow tombs, destined for that purpose. Let it be remembered also, that the current mode of throwing or *sprinkling* earth upon the body, when laid in the ground, is equally and fully more naturally represented by the *sprinkling* of the baptismal water, than by *immersion;* and it would be, I am satisfied, no harsh conjecture to suppose, that the one of these practices may have originally introduced the other.

In support of the present mode of administration of the initiatory sacrament of our religion, is that expression of the apostle St Peter, 'thro' sanctification 'of the spirit unto obedience, and SPRINKLING of the 'blood of Jesus Christ';' which blood is also denoted by St Paul to be the 'blood of SPRINKLING.[2]' For 'all things almost are by the law *cleansed*,' says

[1] St Peter i. 2. [2] Heb. xii. 24.

'says he, by blood.'" And how were they thus *cleansed?* By '*sprinkling*'—we are positively assured; which is authority sufficient to justify the practice, for ages prevalent in the church, of *sprinkling* with the water in baptism; and, at the same time, sufficient to assure us, that the *cleansing* annexed to the ordinance is obtained by *aspersion*, whether *immersion* or *dipping* be used or not.

But the *mode* of administration has never been found to excite so much controversy, as has the *power* or *right* to administer: Insomuch that upon the subject of *Lay-baptism*, more real learning, and solid argument have been expended than, in my opinion, were due: for this reason, that with me it is a matter of doubt, whether, in the strict and literal sense, without inference or deduction, such baptisms were ever practised, or even attempted, under all the corruptions of primitive times; until the church of Rome gave them a sort of countenance, by admitting them to be valid *in cases of necessity*. In the primitive church, the great point of debate regarded baptisms administered by heretics—whether they were to be held valid or not. On the negative side, appeared a considerable part of the Eastern church, headed by *Firmilian*, bishop of Cesarea, and the whole African church, supported by the great *Cyprian*, bishop of Carthage. By this powerful party it was argued, that as baptism could not be validly

[1] Heb. ix. 19—23.

ly administered out of the church, its administration by heretics, by men who had corrupted the catholic faith, and thereby departed from catholic communion, was absolutely null and void. On the affirmative side of the proposition appeared Stephen, bishop of Rome, with the churches dependent on that See, who, while they owned the *irregularity*, yet maintained the validity of such baptisms, stigmatizing those who held the opposite opinion, with the invidious charge of *rebaptizers*, of which the Africans did not fail to deny the application. Whatever authority might have attached to the Cyprianic doctrine, that authority was greatly impaired by the fury of the Donatist party, which raged after Cyprian's death, and carried his arguments, both in matters of faith and practice, to a most outrageous height.

Among many other matters of controversy, the Council of Nice took this also under review, and sustained the validity of *those baptisms* administered by heretics, which were administered according to the appointed form, viz. in the name of the Holy and undivided Trinity, rejecting only the baptisms of such heretics. as either totally disused, or impurely altered that form. By this decision, supported by the labours of subsequent writers[1], the Donatist flame was at length entirely extinguished, and

[1] Augustine of Hippo, Optatus of Milevis, and many others.

and the doctrine which a general council had recognized, was universally acted upon.

Bnt nothing in this early controversy can be said to afford a proper precedent for the irregular baptisms of these latter days; and which particularly predominate in the western parts of the christian world. The church of Rome has indeed, by one stroke of its infallibility, cut the knot of controversy, when it found itself unable to untie it. Such of the protestant profession as plead necessity for their want of a regular episcopal succession in the church, with which it is their lot to be connected, plead the same necessity for their want of regular baptisms. Others of the same profession, who have openly and wantonly rejected regular episcopal government, and have 'hewed them out cisterns, *broken* cisterns,' derive their sacramental administrations from the same *broken cisterns* which they have hewed out for themselves—from the same source from which, in general, their ministerial functions are derived. The united churches of Great Britain and Ireland, which have retained, and which do still enjoy the benefits of, a regular episcopal succession, (and long may they enjoy so distinguished a blessing!) while they see and lament the difficulties which unhappily embarass the subject before us, have hitherto abstained from giving any formal and final determination upon it; thus leaving it open to every clerical and lay member of their communion, to hold such sentiments regarding it, and to act,

in

consequence, as conscience or prudence shall direct.

That there is a defect in all irregular baptisms, a defect which, where it is felt, ought certainly to be supplied, will I hope be readily acknowledged. But whether unavoidable ignorance, and one's being, bona fide, baptized after the instituted form, may not, on his or her coming over to the communion of the church catholic, in some measure pave the way for removing that defect; and whether such defect may not afterwards be supplied by imposition of the hands of the bishop in confirmation, are considerations which it would not become me to do more than simply to suggest; being not ashamed to say that I am incapable of discussing them, much more of deciding on their merit. One thing I can, with a safe conscience do, I can wish and pray, that such discussion may, in God's good time, prove to be unnecessary, by reason of all christian people becoming 'one fold, under one shepherd.' While, in the mean time, I would humbly recommend a firm dependence on the loving-kindness 'of the great shepherd and 'bishop of our souls,' for pardoning any undesigned mistakes, into which the frailty of man may occasionally lead him; and into which, more especially, the frailty of those who are ambassadors for him, and the regular stewards of his mysteries, may, in such perverse times as the present, be the means of their falling, when called upon *to act,* on the subject in hand.

Before

Before concluding this Letter, I have only to advert to the becoming practice, in the administration of baptism, of signing the candidate on the forehead with the sign of the cross; not that this ceremony is reckoned any part of the sacrament, or that the sacrament is reckoned incom lete without it; but that such an early and public opportunity is deemed the most fit to be taken of enlisting, by such an emblematical and long-practised sign, the baptized person under the banner of a crucified Saviour; 'in *token* that hereafter he shall not be a-'shamed to confess his faith in him, and manfully 'to fight under his banner against sin, the world, 'and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful sol-'dier and servant unto his life's end[1].' Nay, I persuade myself that something similar to this ceremony must have occasioned the following language, in St Paul's epistle to the Galatians, which, without some such reference, is wholly inexplicable—'Let 'no man trouble me, for I bear, in my body, the 'marks (στίγματα—impressions) of the Lord Jesus[2]:' and what *mark* of the Lord Jesus has ever been heard of in the christian world, other than the mark or sign of 'him crucified?'

[1] See Form of Baptism, in the Book of Common Prayer.

[2] Gal. vi. 17.

LETTER XXVIII.

HAVING treated, in the former Letter, of the Sacrament of Baptism, I mean to occupy the present with discussing the other, and, according to the protestant faith, the only remaining sacrament of our holy religion. This sublimely mysterious ordinance is termed by St Paul, 'THE LORD'S 'SUPPER'.' It was also at an early period distinguished by the significant title of the *Holy Eucharist*; under both which expressive appellations, the catholic church receives it with the utmost thankfulness and reverential regard, as being the last precious bequest of love and blessing which Christ vouchsafed to give, and which he appropriated to the nourishment, strength, and protection of all the faithful members of his mystical body, in their present militant state on earth.

In this sacred institution, under the material signs and symbols of bread and wine, formally sanctified, and consecrated by prayer, christians are made partakers of the *body* and *blood* of *Christ*, which,

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 20.

which being *(vere et realiter) verily and indeed* present in this holy sacrament, is, in virtue of such presence, believed 'to be verily and indeed taken 'and received by the faithful', in the due celebration of it[1]. This, being the express doctrine authorised in holy scripture, constituted, in general, the belief of the primitive ages, and was cordially embraced in all parts of the church catholic, without fear of indulging superstition, on the one hand —without tendency to modern debasement, on the other.

Indeed all the primitive Fathers, of whose works any remains exist, speak of the sacrament of the Eucharist, in terms of extatic praise and admiration. Its design, and its effects, they simply relate; nor so much as attempt any of those minute descriptions which writers of after-times have introduced; and which, originating in 'philosophy and vain 'deceit,' have clouded and obscured, instead of illustrating this gracious Institution. It is indeed remarkable that, of all the various heretics, who at an early date infested the christian church, not one did ever presume to meddle with the Lord's supper; further than by consequence, and in conformity with the different notions which they entertained about the person and nature of Christ, the original institutor. This indirect mode of cavil excepted, the Eucharistic doctrine continued for

[1] See Church Catechism—Of the Sacraments.

a long period universally and uniformly the same. Nay, uniformity of opinion begat uniformity of practice, as stands exemplified in all the ancient liturgies now extant; which liturgies, whether they really be the genuine compositions or not of those whose names they bear, are in so far valuable as, by their harmony and mutual agreement, they discover to us the belief and the practice of those early ages, in this important article of every christian's faith.

Upon the basis therefore of Scripture doctrine, explained by primitive and catholic usage, we are warranted to behold this divine Institution in a twofold point of view. In the first place, we are warranted to behold it as '*a commemorative sacri-fice*;' or, if this language be thought too near akin to the language of the Romish church, we are warranted to behold it, as '*a sacrificial commemoration*' 'of the one full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, ob-'lation, and satisfaction, which Christ once offered, 'of his *body given*, and of his blood shed for the 'sins of the whole world.' In this view, we celebrate the eucharistic oblation, as the highest and most acceptable act of christian worship (in its two constituent branches of supplication and praise) which the christian church can perform; presenting thereby, in the way of his own appointment, the efficacious merits of Christ's death and atonement, as the sure foundation of all our hopes, and as the only ground upon which we presume to

to plead for, or expect to obtain, any portion of mercy or blessing from 'God in Christ reconcil-'ing the world to himself;' and at the same time, humbly offering our hearty sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise, for the innumerable benefits procured to us by the precious subject of this commemoration.

In the second place, we are warranted to receive the life-giving symbols of bread and wine, as a heavenly repast, or *feast*, upon this commemorative sacrifice, when we become God's peculiar property by a solemn act of oblation; and are thus admitted to the inestimable honour of feasting at his table, as a pledge of his reconciliation and love to us; for the spiritual nourishment of our souls in grace, and for the preservation of our souls and bodies unto everlasting life. In the first point of view, do all faithful christians hold it to be their indispensible duty to celebrate the commemoration of 'Christ, their passover, who was slain' for them, in obedience to their blessed Lord's express command, 'do this in remembrance of me,' or, as the original language more strongly expresses it, 'make this to 'be my (αναμνησις) *commemoration*.' In the second point of view, do all faithful christians esteem it a singular blessing, to be permitted to become privileged partakers of this sanctified food, by eating and drinking what our gracious Lord invited his apostles to eat and drink, when he said—'take, 'eat, this is my body'—'this is my blood, drink ye 'all of it.' The bread which we break, we accordingly

ingly regard as the communion of the *body* of Christ; the cup which we bless, as the communion of the *blood* of Christ; and therefore do we hold it to be a fundamental truth—'that the cup of the 'Lord is not to be denied to the lay-people, but 'that both the parts of the Lord's sacrament, by 'Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to 'be ministred to all christian men alike[1].'

I have now to observe, that, as the sacrament of the Lord's supper holds the most prominent place in the christian system, so has it, in these latter days, been the subject of more contention, and has occasioned more divisions and separations among men professing themselves christians, than any other article of faith whatever. At first received throughout the church with the utmost humility of mind and soul, and celebrated with the most reverent simplicity of devotion, the holy eucharist answered all the beneficial purposes intended by it. By degrees however, and exactly in proportion to the advance made by the Aristotelian philosophy in Europe, did this divine institution become the subject of metaphysical inquiry; until, instead of the venerable depth of mystery in which the holy scriptures had recorded the history of it, and in which the primitive church had long observed it, the supper of our Lord came to be examined, and defined by the newly introduced distinctions of *genus* and *species*, of *substance*

[1] See Article xxx.

substance and *accidents*, of *quid* and *quomodo*, and such like inapplicable subtleties, as the invention of monastic idleness, set to work by the assumed principles of Aristotle, led men to adopt. The issue was such as the church of Rome, by its sovereign authority, thought fit at length to determine. By the decision of the general councils of Lateran and Trent[1] the point of faith was completely settled; and the whole controversy, by the fiat of Rome, became compressed, not into a *volume*, not into a *sentence*, but into *one single newly coined vocable*— 'TRANSUBSTANTIATION.'

It would be to any other purpose than to the purpose of edification, were I to drag the reader through the many intermediate and thorny wilds of metaphysical debate, which served to produce the magical power of this single term; while to mention the cruel methods resorted to, of enforcing belief in its specific virtues, would be to excite feelings unworthy of the subject in hand. Harsh and unintelligible as is the very sound of the word '*transubstantiate*,' it might have been overlooked, with other similar attempts to illustrate 'obscurum 'per obscurius,' had it not been that a definition of the term was given, and required to be received, in the following language: 'The conversion of the 'whole substance of the bread, into the natural body 'of Christ, and of the whole substance of the wine, 'into

[1] The Council of Lateran was held in 1215; that of Trent more than 300 years after.

'into his natural blood, the species or outward ac-
'cidents of the bread and wine only remaining—is
'that which, for wise reasons, the catholic church
'has called *Transubstantiation*.' Yet certain it is, that the Greek church never had, in their language, so much as a word which could be construed to signify what is here ascribed to the word *transubstantiation*, much less a word of similar import.

On its first promulgation, the above definition of the term *transubstantiation* startled many learned men of the Romish communion, who could not digest it as an article of faith. But no sooner had the reformation in Germany checked the rigours of papal severity, than the doctrine, which this definition conveyed, was attacked at all hands, and what is somewhat remarkable, was attacked by arguments successfully drawn from that very system of philosophy which gave the doctrine birth. Yet am I no advocate for the adoption of 'science falsely 'so called,' into religious controversy; far less for conferring on what is merely the result of human ingenuity, the power of deciding one way or another, in the deep doctrines of divine revelation. All such doctrines, and this individual doctrine more especially, I should ever wish to see either combated or defended by weapons drawn from the armoury of scripture, and of primitive antiquity—not by logical deduction, or metaphysical quibbling, which may, by cunning artifice, be diverted to any purpose. Without therefore pronouncing an opinion

nion with respect to the real merits of the victory obtained in this philosophical contest about the doctrine of transubstantiation, I would recommend to the assertor of this doctrine one consideration from Scripture, which, in my opinion, decidedly opposes both the *faith* of the Romish church, and its *practice*. The apostle St Paul expressly calls the *body*, in the Eucharist, 'the *body broken* for us[1],' which is also the current style of the ancient liturgies. Yet another apostle, St John, in applying the paschal lamb, as the type of our Lord's *natural* body, declares in a manner equally incontestable, 'that 'these things were done that the Scripture should 'be fulfilled—*a bone of him shall* NOT *be* BROKEN[2].' If therefore the *eucharistical body* becomes the *natural* body, it is a thing avowedly different from the '*body broken for us.*' But from the above *infallible* authorities, the *eucharistical body, which was broken*, can never become the *natural body*, which was *not to be broken*; and therefore the doctrine, which pronounces them to be one, is heretical doctrine; while the practice of administring, in the form of a *wafer* purposely prepared, that it may *not be broken*, is a heretical practice.

How much is it however to be lamented in this, as in every other matter of controversy, that in flying from one error, men should fall into other errors, and content themselves with a system of belief e-

[1] Cor. xi. 24. [2] St John xix. 36.

qually distant from the standard of truth, though perhaps not of so dangerous a tendency as that from which they were desirous to escape? The great body of the Lutherans, on their separation from the church of Rome, did, it is true, keep up that part of the Lateran doctrine, which asserted the *corporal* presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament of the Lord's supper; but still did they retain so much of the ancient creed which Rome had arrogantly anathematized, as to believe that the *substance*, as well as *accidents* of the bread and wine *still remained*. This union of the two substances they denominated '*consubstantiation*;' a term which both papist and protestant agree, in pronouncing to be equally obscure and unphilosophical as *transubstantiation* itself. Therefore it was rejected by another numerous party, who, following the tenets of Zuinglius and Calvin, taught, and still do teach, that the history given us, in Scripture, of this sacramental institution, is only to be taken *figuratively*, without any kind of *reality* whatever; and who, building their system of belief upon some expressions of the Latin Fathers, in which the consecrated elements are called *figures* of the *body* and *blood* (although far from being so called in the low unmeaning sense imposed upon such language by modern refinement) did, and still do, exclaim against any *real* presence of Christ in the sacrament; which *real presence* they either cannot, or will not distinguish from the *corporal* presence affirmed by the other party. Nay, so far have some

of

of the Calvinistic tribes in this country proceeded in their scheme of degradation, as to annex no other idea to the sacrament of the eucharist, than that of a convivial meeting, where men sit down to eat and drink together, in token of mutual love and harmony—accompanied, by reason of the solemnity of the place, with somewhat of devotion, during the few hours spent in partaking; but unattended by the belief of any thing either sacred or mysterious in the institution itself; although it be undeniably certain, that the words of institution do carry *mystery*—grand and precious mystery—in their most literal sense and construction.

With these effects of misguided belief exposed to his view, how must the sound and sincere christian lament that the most endearing pledge, and the most sacred bond of love and unity among christians should have been made such a source of contention, and have raised such dreadful animosity in the christian world? Nay, that the highest and most honourable mark of regard, which the church, in its present militant state, could have received from its glorious Head, should have ever been despoiled of its just estimation, by means of human passion subverting human judgement? Even the Romish doctrine of *transubstantiation*, professedly meant to aggrandize and add lustre to this venerable mystery, and to the church as the dispenser of it, appears to me, laying other considerations aside, to be injurious to its real and inherent dignity,

much as it restricts one's meditations within the narrow limits of *human* interpretation: Whereas for my own part, I hesitate not to say that, in my estimation, the truly pious soul left to itself, and to the literal words of scripture, unencumbered with any laboured explications or learned definitions, would have loftier, and, it might be, more adequate conceptions of the sacrament itself, and of the design of its adorable author, than words could well express, or the most subtle theologian (his mind of necessity warped by existing systems of belief) could fully reach. Of one thing the devout partaker may rest assured, that when his blessed Saviour said, 'This is my body—this is my blood,' he had in these, to us incomprehensible, words, a fixed and determinate meaning; in firm belief of which, the church has always retained the words of institution in its liturgical service, as the very charter or warrant, by which its eucharistical administrations are authorized. In this case, I leave it to be seriously considered, whether it were not safer, as it is surely more piously humble, to accept of our Saviour's gifts, *in his own words*, and *under his own meaning*, though we ourselves should not altogether apprehend that meaning; than by affixing epithets of our own devising, such as '*natural* 'body,' or '*figurative* body,' (both of which epithets are equally unauthorised by Scripture), to run the risk of imposing upon the language of God incarnate an erroneous sense, and thereby of destroying our own individual claim to the benefits annexed. Disputers

puters may call this by the opprobrious name of *implicit faith*, or by what other name they please; but in a case of such 'exceeding and eternal' interest, I would reckon such conduct to be of a very different description; and therefore would term it 'a manly testimony of becoming submission on the part of a *finite creature*, enjoying communion with *God*, who is *infinite*;' of which no one professing himself a christian needs to be ashamed. At the beginning it was confessedly so. Would to God that such a becoming example had been unceasingly followed! It would have saved trouble to the author of many a perplexed disquisition, and would have prevented much indecent wrangling, which I am afraid has been often employed, less with a view to discover *divine truth*, than to display human skill and learning; and more with a view to controvert an adversary's opinion, than to establish one's own.

Indeed, after all that has been said and written in the explication of this, in some respects inexplicable, subject, the idea of inscrutable mystery must continue to prevail in the mind of the humble and sincere believer. Nor is this more to be wondered at in this instance, than in many other instances of less moment, where a man is sensible of, and can describe the effects, though he neither distinctly knows the cause, nor the precise way and manner of operation. No man is so extravagantly regardless of the health and strength of his *body*, as to refrain from partaking of the food allotted for

that

purpose, until his reason be satisfied as to the way and manner in which his health and strength are promoted by means of food. But many a man has, in this 'age of reason,' become thus regardless of the health and strength of his *soul*, so as to refrain from the food allotted for that purpose—because, forsooth, his reason is not satisfied as to the way and manner in which his spiritual health and strength are promoted by the consecrated elements of bread and wine. In the former case, it is deemed quite enough, that the *operations of nature* should be obvious to the *feelings of sense*, without starting doubts or raising controversies. In the latter case, analogy requires, that the *operations of grace* should be equally obvious to the *feelings of faith*—especially since it dare not be gainsaid, that *both cases* do alike depend *upon the divine blessing*, without which man's *bodily* sustenance, as well as the christian's *sacramental* nutriment, would be equally inefficacious.

But of all the novel deviations from the standard of primitive eucharistical doctrine, there is none among any denomination of christians whatever, which has less colour of excuse, or which has excited more well-founded opposition, than the Romish whim (for it deserves no better name) by which the 'cup of blessing' is denied to the laity. This wanton denial was first decreed by the Council of Constance, and afterwards ratified by the Council of Trent, which had the audacity to embody it in their creed,

creed, and by this means to make it part of the confession of both clergy and laity, that '*under one* '*kind only* whole and entire Christ, and the whole 'sacrament is received.' Surely such an act of arrogant effrontery, directly contrary to Christ's express institution, and (the church of Rome itself being judge) openly at variance with the universal practice of the christian church for more than a thousand years, requires no other confutation than fairly to state the fact. The faint shew of argument in vindication of this denial, which has been adduced from some fanciful inconveniences attending the administration of the cup to the people, is so exquisitely puerile—while resting its vindication on the superior dignity and honour due to the clergy, it is so glaringly 'self-willed and presumptuous,' that it cannot but be matter of indignant surprise, how the many learned and worthy men of the papal communion have not, at least, shewed themselves ashamed of such vain and shallow pretences. Is there not a cause for such submissive silence? Undoubtedly there is—and that cause is no other than the *authority of the church,* which, according to the Romanist's belief, is in every thing worthy of acceptation. In *things indifferent* all respect is, of a truth, due to church authority. But is this a *thing indifferent?* No reasonable man dare assert it to be so. It is a point of positive command, '*Drink ye all of this;*' and protestants hold themselves bound to give the preference to the church's Head, lest they should fall under his severe displea-

sure.

sure, and meet with the same rebuke which he gave the Pharisees of old—'full well ye reject the 'commandment of God, that ye may keep your 'own tradition[1].'

Ere I yet conclude this Letter, there is an observation or two due to a practice which has, by some zealous people, been earnestly contended for—it is the practice of giving the holy eucharist to infants. In some churches this practice was of early adoption, but at no period was it universally received. The plea on which there was, at one time, a wish to revive it, was the parallel which the ancients, who favoured the practice, drew between the two sacraments, from our Saviour's language—'except 'a man be born of water and of the spirit, he can-'not enter into the kingdom of God[2],' compared with, 'except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, 'and drink his blood, ye have no life in you[3].' If the former passage, say the advocates of infant communion, make the sacrament of baptism necessary for children, the latter passage makes the sacrament of the Lord's supper equally necessary for them.

But let it be remembered, that although the two sacraments are of equal authority and obligation, they differ in the design, and in what may be called

[1] St Mark vii. 9. [2] St John iii. 5.
[3] St. John vi. 53.

called, the mode of application. Baptism is the sacrament of spiritual birth, in which the recipient is entirely passive, as is clear from the words of institution—'Go teach all nations, *baptizing them*,' &c. and from every account which we have of the administration of it. It is therefore competent for infants *to be baptized*; since, notwithstanding their incapacity to help themselves, they are certainly capable of being helped by others. In the Eucharist, which is the sacrament of spiritual nourishment, there is a formal act required of the recipient '—*Take, eat*, and *drink*.' This act infants, for some time at least, are not capable of performing. Nor is this all, the words 'this is my body—'this is my blood,' seem to indicate, that there ought to be in the communicant judgement sufficient for 'discerning,' as St Paul terms it, '*the* '*Lord's body*'.' Now whatever may be the proper meaning of this expression, and however defective even the wisest of men may be in the apprehension and application of it, one thing is most certain, that '*the discernment*' required by the apostle is not to be expected of any child *under* what the church terms 'the years of discretion'[2], and until proper instruction, in proportion to his or her growing faculties, has given some faint conception of spiritual things. Upon this difference therefore between the two sacraments of our religion, and which

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 29.

[2] See title to the Order of Confirmation in the book of Common Prayer.

is plainly set forth in holy scripture, it is neither deemed necessary nor expedient to admit children to the holy communion, though it is deemed both necessary and expedient to admit them to the privileges of christian baptism. Nevertheless the church limits no precise time of admission. This must be discretionary in the 'steward of the mysteries of God,' whose duty it is to judge of the degrees of knowledge, and of the desire shewn by the youthful candidate, and to admit or postpone admission accordingly; leaving those who have had but small opportunities of acquiring knowledge, as well as those on whom Almighty God may not have bestowed grace earnestly to desire admission, the former to diligent study, the latter to God's especial mercy and goodness, and, both to the influence and support of that portion of the spirit of holiness which we believe was imparted to them at baptism, and increased by the rite of confirmation. It may no doubt sometimes happen, that this rite has not been received before admission to the Lord's table; yet the act of communicating is by no means to be held as superseding the necessity of confirmation. Even after admission to the communion, confirmation ought duly to be received, if circumstances, which can never be wholly provided against, prevented its being received before.

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

THE efficacy of the two invaluable sacraments of our religion has been not a little controverted by professing christians. From one party, the popular cry of superstition is loud against ascribing too much, or, it may be, any thing at all to positive institutions. By another party, the meek spirit of purity is assumed for the purpose of converting the whole efficacy of such institutions into the mental disposition, and prior preparation of the receiver: While, by a third party, the error of the Cerinthians is avowedly maintained, and the efficacy of the sacraments is ascribed to the merits of the administrator. 'I am of Paul,' says one, 'I 'of Apollos,' says another, and 'I of Cephas,' and 'I of Christ[1],' exclaim the rest—in due succession. Now, by the church to which we have the honour to belong, the efficacy of the christian sacraments is not believed to depend on any thing personal in the authorized administrator[2]; for the reason assigned by St Paul, that *he does not administer in his own name*[3].'

[1] 1 Cor. i. 12. [2] See the xxvi. Article.
[3] 1 Cor. i. 15.

In this case, neither his virtues nor his goodness should be thought to add to the value of the sacrament, or his wickedness and bad qualities to take away from that value. All the effects and blessings to be expected from sacramental institutions flow entirely from the will and promise of the great Institutor, who has been graciously pleased to annex such blessings to them, as public acts of his church, to be indeed performed by regularly commissioned administrators, but not to be affected in their operation, by any natural talents or abilities in the individual officers who are entrusted with the administration of them. At the same time, it is firmly to be believed, and has always been the invariable doctrine of every orthodox churchman, that when the sacraments have been duly administered to, and regularly received by the people, the salutary effects of them will always be according to the dispositions of the receivers, especially in the case of the holy eucharist, which, being both the food and medicine of the soul, does unquestionably require the same care and attention in a spiritual sense, which are required, and which we employ in a natural sense, when we would promote the salutary effects of food and medicine on our bodily frame.

To all therefore who are ready and willing to come to this holy sacrament, the church recommends it as absolutely necessary, that they 'examine themselves, whether they repent them truly 'of their former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a 'new

'new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy 'through Christ, with a thankful remembrance '(that is commemoration) of his death, and be 'in charity with all men[1].' And all this, lest the people, either through habitual carelessness, or wilful neglect, should fall, if not into that woeful state described by St Paul, as the consequence of eating and drinking unworthily[2], yet into that dangerous, because unprofiting condition, against which the same apostle warns us—'of having received 'the grace of God in vain[3].'

When these matters are duly and seriously weighed, the charge of superstition amounts to nothing; and the outcry raised by the silly fanatic, that episcopalians regard the sacraments as so many *charms*—that with them nothing is thought of but the mere '*opus operatum*,' can have effect only on such as 'care for none of these things.' Were I indeed inclined to dispute the matter with such reasoners, I would by no means deny the efficacy, in one respect, of what they are pleased to call the *opus operatum*. For although, in my belief, this cramp scholastic term has tarnished the beauty of these holy mysteries, yet unless an '*opus operatum*' that is '*a work wrought*,' of some sort or another, be permitted in them, I do not see how there can be a *sacrament* at all, in the strictly proper sense of the

[1] See Church Catechism—On the Sacraments.

[2] 1 Cor. xi. 27. [3] 2 Cor. vi. 1.

the word. By denying a *work wrought*, we indeed remove the possibility of any *charm*; but, at the same time, we make of it what an apostle applies to an idol—a mere 'nothing.'

Aware of this, the schoolmen themselves invented another combination of the two vocables, and applied to this puzzling subject, an '*opus operantis*,' that is, '*a work of the worker*.' Nor would I disclaim this expression in its sacramental application, involving, as it does, the following three distinct senses: First, the *work* of the *administrator*: Secondly, the *work* of the *recipient*: And thirdly, the *work* of the *original Institutor*. The last sense I willingly admit, since it is authorised by scripture, which expressly informs us, that 'God *worketh in* 'us';' and farther assures us, 'that God will *fulfil* 'all the good pleasure of his goodness *in* us, and 'the *work* of faith with power[2];' where St Paul admits both the *opus operantis*, and the *opus operatum*, as he evidently does also in the following exhortation—'be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding 'in *the work of the Lord*, (opus operatum), knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord[3],' (that is, in the '*opus operantis*).' It will perhaps be said, that these passages have no reference whatever to the subject in hand. But if this be said, it must be said at the hazard of rejecting from this

[1] Phil. ii. 13. Here the *opus operantis* is clearly expressed.
[2] 2 Thess. i. 11. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 58.

this comprehensive expression, 'THE WORK OF 'THE LORD,' the *ordinances of the Lord's own divine appointment.* Under all these circumstances, I see no good reason why both these scholastic terms, '*opus operatum*,' and '*opus operantis*,' should not be received into our definition of sacramental efficacy; the *former* as expressing '*the work of the Lord* '*wrought*' *in time past*—the *latter*, in the *three* senses already noticed, as expressing, 1. the *work* of the *Institutor*, powerfully *blessing*; 2. the *work* of the *administrator*, regularly *dispensing*; 3. the *work* of the *partaker*, '*nothing doubting*,'—from *the present*, and *active* union of which is derived the gracious *efficacy* annexed to every *sacramental work.*

Philosophy, which, when applied to the doctrines of christianity, is, in my idea, only a politer name for infidelity, may amuse itself with what it wittily terms the *mechanism of grace*; or it may assume a fit of sullen apathy on reviewing the load of learned objections to which this phrase has been from time to time exposed. But, since philosophy has chosen to describe *man* as a *passive machine* in the hands of *nature*, I think it no scorn to own myself, as a *christian*, to be an *active, a rational machine*, in the hands of *grace*, working in me, in one sense, what *nature* worketh in another. And although I should not be fully able to answer every cavilling objection which may be raised, (however willing, and in duty bound, to 'give an answer to every 'one, who, with meekness and fear, asketh me a 'reason

'reason of the hope that is in me'), I can, and I do, most cheerfully and implicitly acquiesce in the sentiments of the psalmist, upon a subject not very dissimilar to the present—'This is the Lord's do-'ing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

Before I conclude this Letter, on the subject of sacramental efficacy, I must yet recur to the subject of the inward disposition, and prior preparation of the receiver, as that by which so many pious souls are unwillingly led astray. In exhibiting the blessings of God, and the duties of man, in one point of view, as the present subject requires, the utmost caution must be observed. To exalt the one at the expence of degrading the other is unquestionably dangerous, while to render to each its due portion of regard, is that which seems to me, to exceed, in a great measure, the power of human discernment. If therefore one or other must, in the discussion, preponderate, surely to exalt the *blessings* of God is man's safest course—since the divine *blessing* is *antecedently* necessary, for the acceptable performance of *any one duty* whatever.

Taking it for granted therefore, that the sacraments are in so far sanctified channels of divine blessing, and that they deserve to be numbered among the many instruments, by which 'God 'worketh in us,' I dare not, consistently with this belief, assign their efficacy to the scanty measure of *human effort*; which, however beneficial as a con-

concomitant, is not to be ranked as a *principal*. And I would have it duly considered by those, who have such a dread of *charm*, and of *superstition*, how prone human nature is to fall into the opposite extreme of *enhancing its own merits* and *attainments*; and even of restricting the blessings of divine promise to the extent of its own *preparatory labours*. In elucidation of my meaning, let me adduce the heinous misconception of the sect calling themselves *anabaptists*; whose leading tenet it is, to deny the sacrament of baptism, until the candidate, having arrived at a certain age of capacity and judgment, is held fit to receive, by means of *his own* attainments, the benefits of that holy ordinance. What is this but to *limit* the extent of Christ's commission granting *unlimited* admission to the laver of regeneration? What is it, but to set at defiance *his example*, as well as *his precept*, to 'suffer little children 'to come unto him?'

Even in the other sacrament, where there is, as I have shewn, *an agency in the recipient* required, I feel jealous of danger from this very quarter, if men are not extremely guarded, and if the most reverential submission be not observed. Thus, in the participation of the holy communion, it is almost universally the theme of the pulpit, as well as of the press, that christians should endeavour to attain the character of WORTHY *communicants*; which character, as it is *not* to be met with in scripture, it would be well, if people were more humbly wary

in aspiring after it; and if both the authors of devotional tracts, and the preachers of discourses on the subject of the holy communion, insisted on it less than they are, for the most part, found to do. '*Unworthy*' is indeed a scriptural term[1]; but it ought to be carefully observed that, in the discharge of this important duty, *worthy* and *unworthy* are not correlates. To be *worthy* of such a transcendent privilege is not in the power of man; while it certainly is in his power to be free from the charge of 'eating the body and drinking the blood of the Lord '*unworthily*.' It is the christian's *honour* to be admitted to this heavenly feast; being however an *unmerited* honour—it is an *honour* of which no man can be *worthy*. A beggar may be entertained at the table of a prince, and he may be entertained there on the most condescending invitation, without having displayed any real proofs of his *being worthy* of such a mark of royal favour. But even the beggar, although he cannot be deemed *worthy* of this honour, may, in the actual presence of his entertainer, render himself, by his behaviour, wholly *unworthy*; and it may happen, that he shall render himself thus *unworthy*, by no part of his behaviour so much as by trusting to some imaginary *worthiness* about himself, to his outward appearance, or inward frame of mind. The parallel is complete, with respect to the case before us. No outward appearance of merit, nor inward exaltation of mind, can make

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 27. 29.

make us *worthy* of becoming guests at his holy table, who is 'King of kings and Lord of lords.' But there is something, the want of which will render us *unworthy* guests, when at any time we are thus honoured. Our Saviour's parable is replete with instruction on this interesting point. The want of a wedding-garment, when the king upbraided the unhappy man with wilfully appearing without it, rendered him speechless before he knew the sentence about to be pronounced[1]. *This wedding-garment* therefore, the best *robe* brought out to be put on the returning prodigal[2], and which, after all, it is possible *to defile*[3]—this is the ornament after which christians ought to aspire, 'the garment 'of salvation, the robe of righteousness[4],' different indeed from the 'filthy rags of our own righteous-'nesses[5], which tended to the immediate exclusion of the man in the parable from the marriage-solemnity of the king's son. Without this garment, which, like the coats of skins provided for our first parents, *Jehovah Aleim* has provided for us, *we* must expect to be alike excluded from the benefits of the sacrificial feast, ordained in honour of the Son of God; while with this garment, as prepared and offered to us in holy Scripture, we shall become not *worthy*, but ACCEPTABLE communicants, 'accepted 'in the beloved[6];' but still ready, with all sincerity,

1 St Matth. xxii. 12.
2 St. Luke xv. 22.
3 Revel. iii. 4.
4 Isaiah lxi. 10.
5 Isaiah lxiv. 6.
6 Ephes. i. 6.

to adopt the humble acknowledgement of the faithful centurion, 'Lord, *we are not worthy* that thou 'shouldst come under our roof; but speak the 'word only, and *thy* servants shall be healed'.'

On the subject of the efficacy of the christian sacraments, I have already adverted to the sentiments of our venerable church, respecting the real or imaginary merits of the administrator. You will pardon me for briefly recurring to this topic, since it is for the most part found, that the majority of an unthinking populace are more attached to the *personal* than to the official *character* of their clergyman, and generally lose sight of the *minister*, in their estimation, or contempt of the *man*. A scandalous, or even a careless pastor, is certainly of all characters the most contemptible in the sight of men; and, in the sight of God, of all characters the most abominable. The least punishment due to such a man is to thrust him with all convenient speed out of his sacred office, that 'the 'ministry be not blamed.' Yet, until thrust out *by competent authority*, the people ought to know, that 'their wisdom is to sit still;' that their duty is to adhere to his ministrations, and patiently to occupy the place of *hearers*, as well as that of *communicants*, until, regular steps having been taken for the suspension and final deposition of the unhappy man, he be duly removed from the congregation committed

[1] St Matth. viii. 8.

committed to his charge. Where a different conduct is pursued, the door of schism, and, it may be, the door of heresy is thrown open. Indeed ecclesiastical history is full of the success of popular prejudice, when excited, against what is termed '*the corrupt lives of the clergy*:' And there is scarcely an instance upon record of a *sect* or *party* being formed against the church, where the promoters of the schism have not been influenced, in the first instance, by this motive, and where they have not introduced themselves to the notice and favour of misguided men, by inveighing against the clerical orders, and by laying claim to superior sanctity in themselves.

I would therefore recommend it most strenuously to every clergyman, who really is, or who even pretends to be *orthodox* in the faith, to be most circumspect, and anxiously solicitous, that the integrity of his life, and the gravity of his deportment do correspond with the purity of his principles, not only for his own eternal advantage, but for the present and eternal advantage of his flock. For thus only can he expect to be pronounced blameless, if those 'who, being ignorant of God's 'righteousness, go about to establish their own 'righteousness,' shall, after all, 'beguile unstable 'souls,' and either pollute the purity of the faith by heresy, or rend the unity of the church by schism.

To the christian people, who are liable to be im-

impressed by external appearances, as well as to be seduced by specious professions, I would offer one observation, (in offering which I beg that I may not be misunderstood), that, however odious and infectious the bad example afforded by an immoral clergyman may be, yet, if we durst attribute any portion of merit to the best of our religious performances, there is perhaps greater merit due to a patient adherence to an immoral pastor, when regularly authorised to minister in holy things, and when sound in the faith, than is due, when such a stumbling-block (for a stumbling-block it unquestionably is) lies not in the way. In the one case, under grievous temptations to act a contrary part, our regard is wholly shewn to the administrations of the church, and we act in obedience to its authority, received from Christ. In the other (tho' the most desireable) case, we run the risk, from the natural tendency of the human disposition, of dividing our regard, and of being influenced as much, perhaps more, by attachment to the *office-bearer*, than by respect for the *office*. As I merely make this observation by way of suggesting hints towards the right conduct of the laity, I rest satisfied that there is no clergyman who can make use of it, as affording the least countenance or indulgence to an unbecoming and uncharacteristic behaviour in life and conversation. Others may speculate upon right and wrong, but the ambassador for Christ is, in particular, commanded to 'take heed unto himself,

'self, and unto his doctrine'—that 'the man of 'God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all 'good works.'

LETTER XXX.

IT is a favourite doctrine with many of the protestant profession, as well as with the Jansenist party of the Romish communion, that they who are once in a state of grace, by whatever way obtained, (*with* or *without* means), can never *totally* and *finally* fall from grace; but are *unalterably*—I may say, FATALLY fixed, in the love and favour of God, notwithstanding *any*, nay, *every* sin which, in the mean time, they may commit. So far indeed has this impious conceit been carried by some, that, fancying themselves to be possessed of this peculiar privilege, they have not hesitated to aver, that they cannot commit sin, that they may '*slide*,' but can never 'fall away;' presumptuously assuming it as a case in point, that neither the

the *adultery* of the psalmist, nor St Peter's base denial of his master, were reckoned sins in the sight of God.

I should be loth to impute the bad consequences of any doctrine to the maintainers of it, when such consequences are openly, on their part, disavowed and solemnly denied: But as, in the present instance, the consequences flowing from the doctrine are of the most suspicious nature, as they regard both the christian's *faith* and his *practice*, it becomes a matter of duty to guard the theological student against the doctrine, be the abettors of it who or what they will. I am aware of what has been said, and of all that can well be said, in support of this darling tenet, which has long been dignified with the specious title of '*The perseverance of the saints*;' and which, under such a bewitching designation, does at this hour bid, as it were, defiance to all contradiction. Without however entering into the wide field of disputation, which has been traversed for authorities both for and against the '*saints' perseverance*,' I shall content myself with denying the authority which the scriptural examples above noticed are supposed to afford; and would have it observed, that the instances of king David, and of the apostle St Peter, and the like, admitting that their transgressions were covered by the especial measures of divine grace bestowed upon them, yet being cases of particular persons, under

under *particular* circumstances, and selected for exhibiting *particular* views of divine wisdom, they are, on no account whatever, to be brought into *general* application, as precedents adapted to the use of christians at large. Their *faith* and their *practice* ought to be regulated entirely by the concurrent testimony *of the whole code of divine revelation;* not by insulated texts, or by *particular mercies* vouchsafed to the *particular objects* of sacred history, who are, on that account, no more to be esteemed standards of *general* belief, or of *general* hope and confidence, than St Paul, in his miraculous conversion and extraordinary mission, can be said to be.

Besides, none have a right to be denominated '*saints*' but such as '*persevere to the end;*' as, in my apprehension, the Westminster catechism itself teaches, when it asserts, 'that the souls of be-'lievers are at their death made perfect in holi-'ness;' which surely implies that till death, the '*holiness*,' that is, the '*saintship*,' of believers is *not perfect;* and consequently, that none but those who *persevere until death* are *proper* and *perfect saints.* Hence it follows, that the '*perseverance of the saints*,' and the '*saintship of perseverance*' are convertible terms, and precisely of the same signification; so that in the captivating title bestowed on this unscriptural doctrine, there appears an intentional ambiguity of expression, which has only to be detected, to shew the deceit which its authors have but too

successfully practised on the thoughtless and unwary.

But as this point of doctrine, with all its consequences of what nature soever, is involved in another branch of systematic error, to which I shall by and by have occasion to speak, I shall forbear to enlarge upon it now; and pass on to discuss another equally suspicious tenet, held and avowed by the abettors of the doctrine of '*Perseverance*,' &c. that '*they, who fall from grace once received, can 'never be restored to it again, but must inevitably, and 'for ever perish.*'

This strange and appalling opinion was first broached in the second century by the Montanist party, to whose principles the reputation of the famed *Tertullian*, who latterly became a Montanist, gave some sort of character. It was afterwards, when a little improved and mollified, vigorously maintained by the Novatians, who indeed referred all, who had thus fallen from grace once received, to the *secret* disposal of Almighty God, peremptorily excluding them from any hope or prospect of pardon *in or by the church*. This rigorous discipline the Novatians founded upon some expressions of St Paul, which seem to give it countenance; not forgetting to make use of our Saviour's own declaration, that '*the sin against the Holy Ghost*' is a *sin* beyond the reach of forgiveness. Yet, all interpreters and commentators, ancient and modern, Romanist and reformed,

reformed, agree in this, that 'the sin against the 'Holy Ghost,' which our Saviour particularizes, and to which St Paul, in the severe denunciations which his epistles contain, seems to allude, was of a nature peculiarly atrocious, being fraught with danger peculiar to the circumstances and the opportunities of the early ages of christianity; to which circumstances after-times are not exposed, and with which opportunities they are not blessed. Hence, it is most warrantably concluded, that the harsh doctrine drawn from this declaration, and from the apostle's denunciation, (whatever may have been the import of them, so long as the circumstances and opportunities, enjoyed by these early ages, existed), is now, on no account, to be extended beyond its original design, or to be applied to the deviations and backslidings, incident to human nature, in the very best of christians.

Our belief, therefore, in opposition to both the ill-founded doctrines above noticed, is this—that taking, as scripture directs, things natural to be emblems of things spiritual, and parabolically instructive of the latter, our *spiritual* health may be said to correspond with our *bodily* health; both of them are equally precarious, equally liable to interruption; while both, in a large majority of cases, are recoverable by a timely application to the proper remedies, and by a regimen adapted to such remedies, when seasonably applied. 'He that is 'whole needeth not a *physician*, but he that is sick.'

'That there is *no health in us*,' is however our daily confession; in which case, the great *Physician* of souls, of whose aid we all stand so much in *need*, has provided sufficient 'medicine to heal our sickness;' and has withal prescribed the proper regimen both for restoring, and for preserving when restored, our spiritual health and strength. His *household*, *the church*, may be considered as the place of cure to which the christian is commanded to resort; that therein he may receive from the duly-appointed officers of the household, whose duty it is to 'minister in holy things,' the means of grace and salvation—and that without respect of persons. For the trite distinctions of sins, into what are termed '*deadly*,' and '*venial*,' I see no authority; as, every *sin*, being a transgression of the divine law, is to be reckoned *deadly*[1] in *one* sense, and *venial* in *another*[2]; *deadly*, when habitually and obstinately persisted in; and *venial*, when sincerely and seasonably repented of, and duly washed away by the means now recommended. As there is no absolute perfection in any thing temporal or spiritual to be attained here below, all christian people ought to be very careful, lest they be, on the one hand, puffed up with an overweening conceit of their own attainments in grace, to the contempt of the instituted means of grace; or lest they be, on the

[1] The wages of sin is death—Rom. vi. 23.

[2] As in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive—1 Cor. xv. 22.

the other hand, sunk into a state of despondency, even from a just sense of their own unworthiness, so as to neglect the use of those means, when duly and regularly held out to them. Both these extremes are to be equally avoided, as they are equally fatal. The 'stewards of the mysteries of 'God' must be true and just in all their *dealings;* they must not deny the comfort of the bread of life and cup of salvation to any humble supplicant belonging to the household of faith; but be ever ready to dispense these, and the other benefits of their holy calling, with meekness and charity—looking unto Jesus, 'the author and giver of every 'good and perfect gift,' who has graciously invited 'all who are weary and heavy laden to come unto 'him;' and who assures us, that '*whosoever* cometh 'to him, he will in nowise cast out[1].' Still however must the *church* (that is, those whom God hath made the *overseers* of it) retain the prudent exercise of that wholesome discipline, committed to it, [2] 'for 'edification, not for destruction[3],' for mortifying 'the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day 'of the Lord Jesus[4].' Atrocious cases of irreligion and immorality may thus, sometimes, require the full extent of that punishment known by the name of *excommunication;* a punishment which ought never to be applied, but with the utmost possible caution and tenderness, with no mixture of personal animosity,

[1] St Matth. xi. 28. St John vi. 37. [2] 2 Cor. x. 8.
[3] St Matth. xvii. 28. St John xx. 23. [4] 1 Cor. v. 5.

mosity, or worldly views of any sort whatever, lest the unhappy offender should be injured in his temporal concerns, or lest he should be unfitted for discharging the duties still incumbent on him, as a member of civil society, as a son, as a parent, as a subject, or as a friend. Excommunication is to be inflicted in a purely spiritual manner, and with views purely spiritual, in order to reform, not to ruin any one, for whom Christ died; in order, by the last resource which the church is permitted to adopt, to fit even the worst of sinners for being in due time restored to the favour and acceptance of his omniscient Judge, and the lost sheep to the healthful pasturage of that flock, from which he may have, for a while, grievously erred and strayed.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

WHAT is contained in the two Letters immediately preceding brings us now to the discussion of another important branch of theological science, viz. the *nature*, the *necessity*, and the *consequences*, or, as some would have it, the merit of 'GOOD WORKS.' In the usual mode of managing this discussion, so apparently simple, and easy of management, such a number of divisions and subdivisions have been introduced as, in my opinion, tend more to perplex than to edify the theological student—more to embarass the subject, than to illustrate it.

If, by *good works*, be understood a life and conversation conformable to, and directed by, the precepts of christianity, (as must be the meaning of the term, when used by christians), it is certain that *good works* are not only recommended, but expressly enjoined by Christ and his apostles; and, on the strength of that express injunction, the church believes, that *good works* are, not *generally*, but *absolutely necessary*, and *indispensibly obligatory* upon all christian

christian people, under the penalty annexed to the *neglect* of them; whether the *performance* of them be, according to the strictness of divine justice, worthy of reward or not. We therefore detest, and reject the Antinomian error, which, by disparaging the doctrine of *good works*, discourages the practice of them; and, on the people committed to our charge, we do, on apostolical authority, inculcate the necessity which exists for their being '*zealous of good works*'[1]. This *zeal*, though in itself no way '*meritorious*' of the salvation purchased for us, by the blood of Christ, and freely offered to us in the gospel, we believe to be in some measure preventive of threatened punishment[2]. And as we disclaim all pretensions to *merit*, (in the strict sense of that bewitching term), it follows of course, that we cannot entertain the most distant thought of our being able to '*supererogate*,' that is, *do more* '*than is strictly requisite*, being conscious of the many defects which attend our very best performances; and having been taught by our great lawgiver to acknowledge, that 'when we shall have done 'all that is commanded us, we are but unprofit-'able servants'[3]—*unprofitable*, literally, to our heavenly Master, who *may* be pleased, but *cannot* be benefited by our best services; and without the condescension of his gratuitous promise, *unprofitable* to ourselves, in as far as to be *profitable to ourselves* means *our* attainment of eternal life.

You

[1] Tit. ii. 14. [2] See Article xii.
[3] St Luke xvii. 10. and Article xiv.

You have no doubt often heard of the common and much applauded distinction between *moral* and *positive* obligation; in consequence of which it is boldly argued, 'that some things are commanded, 'because they are good;' and 'somethings are 'good, because they are commanded.' For this philosophical axiom there does not appear to me any just or valid authority; and I suspect that the end, which it is meant to serve, is not such as can well be vindicated. The philosopher may continue to harangue on the '*eternal laws of good and* '*evil*,' but as no adequate interpretation of this cant phrase has ever yet been afforded, I judge it safest and best for the humble christian to derive his ideas and definition of *good and evil* from the *revealed* will of that *Eternal* Being who owns *no laws*, but the perfections of his own nature; and who, by his own infinite wisdom and sovereign pleasure has impressed the indelible character of 'GOOD,' upon what *He has positively commanded*, and of 'EVIL' on what *He has positively forbidden*. In this case I, for one, am not ashamed to say, that I do acknowledge no *morality*, but that which flows from, and which depends upon the positive will of God. The genius of philosophy may, and I doubt not will, continue to sport with the fanciful distinction of 'moral' and 'positive' duties; but the introduction of any such fanciful distinction into a system of christian faith, is an act of presumption which ought to be severely reprobated; as on no account is *reason* to be permitted to encroach upon the clear and instruc-

tive dictates of *divine revelation.* 'Can God,' it has been impiously argued, 'by his absolute will *com-* 'mand, or by his almighty power *perform* any thing 'that is EVIL?' To the humble christian, the answer is both plain and easy—'God can *command,* 'and God can *perform* whatever he pleaseth, and 'whatever God does *command* or *perform,* or *com-* 'mand to be performed—is GOOD.'

Another of these subtle theses, much agitated in the theological schools, and which is held out as the test of modern orthodoxy, is this: 'Are good 'works necessary to salvation?' When couched in these terms, the question is ambiguous; and, by explaining the term 'SALVATION' in two different ways, may be answered either *negatively* or *affirmatively:* thus, 'Are good works necessary to' (bring us into a state of) 'salvation?' Assuredly *not.* 'Are good works necessary to' (keep us in a state of) 'salvation?' Assuredly *Yes.* This has ever been orthodox protestant doctrine; and it was the publicly avowed, and authorised doctrine of the Scottish episcopal church, in the time of its first regular establishment, as appears from the tenth of the ecclesiastical canons, deliberately drawn up, and duly sanctioned anno 1636[1]. This canon ordains, 'that all ministers shall, as their text gives 'occa-

[1] By reason of the subsequent troubles, these canons were never reduced into practice; and they are not adapted to the constitution of the church at present.

'occasion, urge the *necessity of good works*, as they 'would be saved; and remember that *they* are *via* '*regni, the way to the kingdom of heaven, quamvis non* '*sint causa regnandi, howbeit they be not the cause of* '*our salvation.*'

To this declaration of our worthy predecessors we are desirous to adhere; inasmuch as the distinction '*via regni*, quamvis *non causa regnandi*,' which the canon, in the words of St Bernard, has laid down, is completely conformable to the doctrine of all the Antipelagian Fathers, and amply sufficient to silence all polemical wrangling about the *necessity of good works*; which, in the emphatical language of Article XII. 'though they cannot put away our 'sins, nor endure the severity of God's judgement, 'yet, when springing from a true and lively faith, 'are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ.'

The busy and fertile intellect of man has, however, occupied itself with another enquiry on this subject, of a nature more *curious* than *christian*. The enquiry is regarding the good works of heathens—what effects are to be attributed to them; and in what estimation they are to be held, as to their present quality and ultimate reward. Respecting this point the Greek and Latin Fathers differed very widely. *Justin Martyr*, who was a Greek, and who, previous to his conversion to christianity, belonged to the Platonic school of philosophy, speaks,

even after his conversion, as I have already shewn[1], very favourably of *Plato's* master, *Socrates*. On the other hand, the Latin Father *Tertullian*, who seems, prior to his conversion to christianity, to have been a mere *tabula rasa*, as to philosophy of any sort, represents the great *Socrates* in a quite opposite light, as being, by his own confession, actuated by an attendant spirit, whom *Tertullian*, as I have also shewn in a former Letter[2], hesitates not to call '*dæmonium*,' *a devil*, pessimum revera pædagogum, 'the *worst in fact of all tutors*.' The leading doctor of the Latin church, the celebrated *Augustine*, denominates the good works of heathens '*splendida peccata*'—*splendid sins*. Perhaps both *Tertullian* and *Augustine* have overstepped the bounds of christian propriety in their expressions of censure, as much as *Justin Martyr* and others have done in their expressions of commendation. We are therefore in duty bound to regard both the one and the other, with an eye to the circumstances of their respective countries, and former principles; while we strictly adhere to the opinion of the most conspicuous part of the reformed church, the venerable church of England, as expressed with becoming modesty in the XIIIth Article—'Works done 'before the grace of Christ, &c. are not pleasant to 'God, &c. yea rather, for that they are *not* done 'as God hath willed and commanded them to be 'done, we doubt not but they have the nature of 'sin.'

Yet

[1] See Letter XI. p. 102, [2] Letter XI. p. 103.

Yet it is not so much the importance of *heathen morality*, which ought, as a topic of theological discussion, to claim the attention of the christian divine, as the *praise* which he hears or sees daily bestowed on the *heathen* sages. The condition of the pagan world, and the thoughts to be entertained by the christian regarding it, I have already disposed of, in a manner which, I trust, has some claim to notice[1]. Still, however when *christian morality* is in danger of being put (to say the least) on a level with any system or systems of heathen ethics; when under the sanction of great names, a heterogeneous and superfluous mixture of paganism and christianity is vamped up, to the visible corruption of *christian practice*, and to the designed injury of the true *christian faith*, I dare not forbear from warning those, who are fitting themselves for the ministerial office, against such ensnaring errors; and from entering my humble protest against their admission into that portion of the church, in which I have long esteemed it my honour to serve. In the whole catalogue of modern maxims, is there any one more ready to be adduced, in every such discussion as the present, than the unseemly couplet of the Poet—

> "For modes of *faith* let senseless zealots fight,
> "His can't be wrong, whose *life* is in the *right*?"

Yet where, I well may ask, is there to be found a more

[1] See Letter XXV. p. 278, 279.

more antichristian sentiment than is sported in these ridiculous, though highly applauded lines? Is the man who has been, by baptism, made 'a member 'of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the 'kingdom of heaven?' Is he who has been signed with the sign of the cross, in token 'that he shall 'not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ cru-'cified, and *manfully to fight under his banner,*' &c. and who, when arrived at the years of discretion, has moreover ratified and confirmed the solemn promise and vow which was made in his name at his baptism? Is *he* to be characterized as '*a sense-'less zealot,*' because he '*fights for that mode of 'faith,*' for which he swore at God's holy altar that he *would fight?* While the man, on the other hand, who, having been admitted to all the privileges of our holy religion, and who having come under the same *sworn* engagements with us in all, has wilfully and contemptuously rejected the *former*, and broken the *latter;* and has wantonly departed from the true faith and fear of God's holy name and his word, by embracing the *Socinian* debasement of the person of his glorious Redeemer, or by glorying in the *deistical* denial of all the life-giving doctrines of the gospel—is to be applauded, and '*his 'life*' pronounced '*to be in the right,*' because it may happen that he has no inclination '*to murder, steal, or whore?*' God forbid. Let then the poet, the philosopher, or the preacher who dares utter such blasphemy, be regarded as 'beside himself;' otherwise 'it shall certainly be more tolerable for the land

'of

'of Sodom in the day of judgement,' than for the land whose people are disposed to cherish such ruinous doctrines[1]. For, if what our Saviour has said of himself *be true* (and where is the man professing himself a christian, who dares avowedly maintain that it is *not true?*) 'WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NO-'THING,' what shall become of all the boasted *morality* of the Deist and Socinian? To what must all those GOOD WORKS tend, which are not only exulted in as having been performed independent of a '*right* '*faith*' in the performer; but which have been performed for the *laudable* purpose of undermining every principle of true and undefiled religion?

I leave these, and such like reflections, with the *christian friends* of *unchristian* morality; whom, I am willing to hope, an excess of what is *commonly*, though *erroneously*, called 'CHARITY,' has induced to adopt the opinion, 'that it is *indifferent* what a 'man *believes*, provided only that he acts an inoffen-'sive part in social life.'

[1] See as particularly applicable, St Matth. xi. 19. to 25.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

FROM discussing the doctrine of *Works*, as I have briefly done in the foregoing Letter, I am led to treat, in the present Letter, of the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION.

Of all the points of christian faith, which the reformers had to debate with the church of Rome, the point of *Justification* was that which, next to *Transubstantiation*, produced the greatest display of zeal, as well as the greatest variety of learned argumentation. It is certain, that when *Luther* commenced the work of reform, the Romish church had both adopted and published strange opinions, on the fundamental points of FAITH; and had not only ascribed the christian's *justification* to the merit of *works*, but had in a great measure confined that merit to the practice of excessive devotions, and of making large donations to images, saints, and relics; which donations were warmly recommended, and at length expressly enjoined, under the specious, and almost exclusive title of '*works of piety*,' or '*good works*.'

The extravagance of this conceit gave the reformers

formers a powerful advantage, which they did not fail to seize. And though it cannot be denied, that Luther carried his opposition to an undue length, so far indeed, as to exclude the apostle St James from the list of canonical writers, on account of his apparent testimony to the merit of *good works;* yet this essential article of our christian creed, *Justification by faith,* was, at that period, so clearly illustrated, and so firmly established, that to this very day it constitutes the catholic belief of every denomination of well-informed and conscientious protestants. At the same time, it is not to be concealed, that upon a strict investigation of this catholic doctrine, there do appear difficulties, arising by no means out of the intrinsic nature of the doctrine itself, but out of the multifarious explications and illustrations, to which the doctrine has given birth. The seeming contrariety between *St Paul* and *St James,* on this very subject, has proved a source of inconceivable debate and altercation. Many attempts have been made to reconcile the existing difference in their language. That such attempts are well meant, it would be uncharitable not to believe. Yet I could wish, that their authors had described them by another name than '*Reconciliation.*' It is no doubt a fit occupation for philosophical criticism, to *reconcile* a *Plato* and an *Aristotle:* But the christian critic revolts at the supposed necessity of *reconciling* two *inspired apostles;* more especially on the subject of *one of the fundamental articles of his faith!* The very idea of their *opposing* each other is enough to confirm the

sceptic in his system of doubting and distrust, and to give the irreverent scoffer a theme for the display of his wit and blasphemy; which, when but the semblance of foundation is given, are sure to produce the desired effect on the young, the thoughtless, and the unwary.

Believing, as we all do, that these two eminent apostles were both alike gifted with the spirit of truth, we must necessarily infer, that there can be no contrariety in what they have delivered as a point of *doctrine*. They may differ in their respective modes of expression; but it ought to be the endeavour of every one, who 'searcheth the scrip-'tures,' in the way which his blessed Master has commanded, to *reconcile* his own mind to their respective modes of expression, which may easily be done, by imputing any *defect of explication* to weakness of apprehension in the *uninspired explicator*, not to any possible defect in the *inspired author*. Actuated by zeal for the glory of God, and the promoting his truth and righteousness, and with that view, applying what has just now been remarked, to my own exertions, as a biblical critic, I proceed, not as derogating from the learning and labours of former expositors; but, as having profited by their well-meant endeavours, to offer my mite in explication of a doctrine, as to the real essence of which, I hope and trust that all christian people are unanimous,

There

There are connected with this essential doctrine, several terms, which require to be defined, before the doctrine itself can be satisfactorily elucidated, as well as to be viewed, in their relation to each other, and in the connection which we shall discover to subsist between them. The terms are 'JUSTIFICATION,' 'FAITH,' and 'WORKS.'

It has been said, that the term *justification* is a forensic term, that is, a term used in courts of law, for acquitting the *accused*, and for declaring them innocent of the offence charged upon them. And in this sense the term has been held to signify, in its religious acceptation, '*The remission, or forgiveness of sin*;' a definition which does not fully accord with the sense of acquitting a criminal, who upon trial was pronounced 'not guilty.' Besides, no sin can be *forgiven* until it has been *committed*; which, where *original sin* is denied, makes *justification*, in the abstract, of none effect: and they, who have adopted the above definition of the term, own farther, that in strict propriety of expression, no man can be said to be *justified*, until the final sentence be pronounced, whether that sentence be pronounced at *each individual death*, or be reserved for the day of *general* judgement. In order to simplify the doctrine, some would have us to believe, that *justification* implied merely our being at peace with God, and our being individually acceptable in his sight; which I admit may become the *happy consequence* of *justification*, but surely is not *radically* the *import* of the *term*.

Of all the definitions which have come under my eye, none does reach so near to the strict etymological sense of the term, as that contained in our own eleventh Article, entitled, 'Of the Justification of Man.' For herein it is declared, 'that we 'are accounted *righteous* (JUSTI—says the Latin) 'before God, only for the merit of our Lord and 'Saviour Jesus Christ.' But if we consult the analogy of faith, what part of Christ's merit can be so applicable in this respect to us, as his *righteousness*? One prophet expressly terms the Messiah, 'Jehovah's *righteous* servant, who shall *justify* many[1]. Another calls him 'Jehovah *our righteousness*,' or '*our righteous one*[2].' But St John affirms 'our advocate with the Father' to be 'Jesus Christ, *the* '*righteous*[3].' While St Paul explicitly asserts 'that 'Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom and *righte*-'*ousness*[4],' &c. Our thoughts being thus at once directed to the *righteousness of Christ*, we shall find that the whole of the momentous discussion in hand, depends upon a proper explication of this inestimable quality in God our Saviour.

Here I feel it incumbent on me to observe, with becoming deference to the learned translators, that in the English version of the Scriptures, their promiscuously rendering the same word sometimes 'RIGHTEOUS,' at other times 'JUST,' has been the means

[1] Isaiah liii. 11. [2] Jerem. xxiii. 6.
[3] 1 St John ii. 1. [4] 1 Cor. i. 30.

means of affixing to the original Hebrew and Greek terms the exclusive idea which custom has long affixed to the word 'JUST,' viz. the idea of '*equity*,' of '*honesty*,' of '*fair-dealing*,' &c. and that consequently the word '*righteous*' signifies the same, and no more. Hence it is that the term *righteousness* has become but another name for *moral worth*; and in our popular discourses and dissertations on religion, the expression of '*The moral righteousness of Christ*' is received and avowed to be standard language. Yet how suitable such language is to the scriptural character of Christ, I shall refer to every sober-minded christian, after putting this one question to him, among many others which might be put, 'Whether Christ's being baptized 'in Jordan, (which act of condescension was sanctioned by a 'voice from heaven'), was with no other view than 'TO FULFILL ALL MORALITY?'[1]

I forbear to teaze the reader with any learned criticism upon the Hebrew term צדק, or the Greek term 'δικαιος,' neither of which ought to be restricted to a *moral* acceptation; I shall only observe, that even our English term 'RIGHTEOUS,' being a derivative of the word 'RIGHT,' includes in it (as its root does) one idea, at least, different from its *moral* acceptation, and not necessarily connected with it. Thus we say, a '*right*, or '*righteous cause*,' a '*right*, or *righteous heir*,' a '*right* of

[1] St Matth. iii. 15.

'of inheritance[1],' &c. None of these applications of the terms '*right*' and '*righteous*,' are connected with a man's *moral* worth, which stands expressed by another derivative from the same root, viz. 'UP-'RIGHT.'

The Latin word 'JUSTUS,' (from which comes our English vocable JUST), does also bear two different senses; being derived from 'JUS—*right, title,* 'or *claim,*' all of them distinct from *moral rectitude,* as the following paradoxical maxim in the Roman law sufficiently shews—'Prætor, in tribunali, JUS 'dicit etiam cum INIQUE dicit,' '*The judge, on the* '*bench, decrees* RIGHT, *even when he decrees* WRONG;' i. e. establishes a *right,* where there was previously *no right.* In this sense therefore, which is unquestionably the scriptural sense of the words translated '*righteous,*' and which, in my humble conception, even the term itself, when properly defined, is fully adequate to express, I could wish it applied to Christ, as incontestably and peculiarly belonging to *him,* who, 'having all POWER in heaven and in earth (*right, authority,* ἐξουσια[2]) given unto him,' possesses *all right* in his own immaculate person. He is therefore 'the RIGHT,' 'RIGHTFUL,' and 'RIGHTEOUS Heir' of the everlasting and incorruptible inheritance, to which he does authoritatively convey *a right in reversion* to all his faithful members; who thus '*hold*

'*of*

[1] See Deut. xxi. 17. Ruth iv. 6. Jerem. xxxii. 8.

[2] See St Matth. ix. 6. Revel. xxii. 14. St. Matth. xxviii. 18.

'*of him*,' (to speak in the language of territorial conveyancing), and derive right *from him*, as their *rightful superior*; and thus being made partakers of their redeemer's *righteousness*, they 'become 'heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.'

This deduction is enough of itself to exclude 'good works' from affording any *antecedent* claim to, or concern in, the great blessing of our *justification*. Nay, this truly scriptural mode of reasoning, confirmed as it is by legal usage in matters temporal, is sufficient to free the evangelical, yet ill-understood doctrine of '*imputed* righteousness,' from the silly cavil to which the *moral* idea attached to the word '*righteousness*' has not failed to expose it: namely, 'that it is unreasonable to suppose, and 'impossible to conceive how *the good deeds, or moral* '*qualities* of one person can, in propriety either of 'speech or of fact, be *imputed* or *ascribed* to another 'person, so as to become *that person's own*.' For, in the sense, above shewn to be the *true sense* of the terms '*righteous*,' and '*righteousness*,' it is well known, that a *right*, a JUS, a *title*, or claim to a gift or inheritance, may be *conveyed*, and *given*, and *derived*, (if *imputed* shall be thought an unappropriate vocable), by a *just* and *righteous* author: while such as are thus *entitled* are really and truly persons JUSTIFICATI, *justified*, that is, made 'JUST,' 'RIGHTEOUS,' and 'RIGHTFUL' heirs.

The next term which claims our notice, is the term

'FAITH.' *Faith*, in the abstract, has ever been held to denote the simple act of believing. According to St Paul's authentic definition of it—'Faith is the 'substance of things hoped for; the evidence of 'things not seen[1].' When coupled with the term *justification*, the word *faith* has been, however, for particular reasons, made to embrace the whole system of gospel-ethics, and to denote an universal obedience to the *evangelical law*, in opposition to the *law of Moses*; whereby '*good works*' fall to be included, not as fruits springing from the root of *faith*, but as qualities incorporated in its very nature and essence.

In my humble opinion, this is really to extend the term beyond the limits assigned to it; and, if such extension is permitted, every important doctrinal term in scripture may be racked to whatever purpose a particular system may require. I know well that some insulated passages of scripture[2], and some common modes of expression[3] may be adduced, as authorising the extension of the term. But the expression, '*justified by faith*,' does neither require, nor can admit such an extension. The admission of it, indeed, so far from being required, would go to prevent the blessing, to the obtaining

[1] Heb. xi. 1. This definition the apostle pursues through the whole of this instructive chapter.

[2] See Gal. i. 23. 1 Tim. i. 19. Jude ver. 3.

[3] Such as, 'The christian Faith,' 'The catholic Faith,' &c.

taining of which, *faith* is declared necessary. In my conception therefore, *the faith by which we are justified* ought to be defined with a becoming regard to the definition which I have given of the word *justification;* and thus be held to signify 'the christian's 'claim of *right* to that inheritance, purchased by the 'merits, active as well as passive, of the Lord Jesus 'Christ, offered and conveyed to him (the christian) 'as far as his Saviour's *right* of conveyance extends, 'and accepted *by him* in virtue *only* of his Saviour's '*right;* with which right every faithful disciple is 'freely and graciously invested.'

We now come to examine and define the third term connected with our present subject, viz. the term 'WORKS,' about which one should think, that there needed be but little difficulty. Yet, strange to tell, expositors do differ most widely regarding it. By the *works* which St Paul excludes, are to to be understood, say some, the '*works of the ceremonial law,*' which law is abrogated, and therefore such works cannot justify. Yet certain it is, that the Greek word 'δικαιωματα,' which our translators, in one place, render *ceremonies*[1], does *radically* imply *justification,* which made the pious Mr Hervey to say, with great semblance of truth, that 'by 'the *moral law* he was *condemned,* but by the *cere-* '*monial law,* he was *justified.*' Others therefore, with more propriety, extend *St Paul's exclusion* to

 the

[1] See marginal rendering of Heb. ix. 1.

the whole code of the Mosaic law, *moral* as well as *ceremonial*, in contradistinction to the *law of the gospel*; which, according to them, is what *St James* means to comprehend in his system of *inclusion*: and thus we are told are the two apostles fairly reconciled. But, in my opinion, such a mode of reconciliation is not fairly deducible from the language of *St James*. He speaks not of 'GOOD 'WORKS,' although the epithet *good* be for the most part (yet erroneously) added to these *works*, which this apostle connects with *justification*. Of what character, I would ask, were the two instances of *justification by works*, which *St James* particularizes? Surely not of the character or denomination of 'GOOD *works*,' in a *moral* sense, or 'GOOD' according to *any law*, whether of nature, or of Moses, or of Christ? A man's preparing to cut the throat of an only son[1], and a woman's deliberately telling a falsehood to deceive the messengers of her earthly sovereign, and ensure the more effectually her country's ruin[2], are certainly acts which it is impossible to reconcile with that *moral righteousness* which Socrates taught, with those laws which Moses delivered, or with any precept which our Lord Jesus Christ either uttered or sanctioned. Like sundry

[1] "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had "offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?" St James ii. 21.

[2] "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had re- "ceived the messengers, and sent them out another way?" St James ii. 25.—"There came two men unto me," &c.—"but when it was "*dark*, the men went out," &c. Joshua ii. 2—6.

dry others recorded in scripture[1], these acts admit of no other satisfactory exposition, but that which, with becoming humility of mind, regards them as peculiar, and, as it were, *pro re nata*, exemplifications of a particular and temporary impulse of faith, with a view to some particular purpose of divine wisdom; but, on no account whatever, to be admitted as precedents for general or partial adoption, unless when men are placed in the *same circumstances*, and can shew that they act *under the same authority*. For my own part, in every case which the scripture exhibits, of *apparent deviation* from the generally received system of *moral rectitude*, I implicitly adopt the direction given by the venerable christian Father Irenæus—'whatever the scripture 'does not reprove, but simply narrate, we ought 'not to be accusers,' (and I would add, '*nor imitators*'), 'but, *typum quærere*, it is our duty to search 'for a type[2].'

 Having

[1] Rebecca's persuading a son to deceive a father, and outwit a brother—Gen. xxvii. and Jael's treachery to Sisera—Judges iv. The one in part explained, ver. 41. 42. the other accounted for, Judges iv. 9. and ch. v. 24.

[2] Oper. Irenæi, lib. iv. c. 50. In the case of Rahab, this pious Father says, in his 37th chapter, 'Rahab the harlot confessing herself 'to be a heathen, guilty of all sins, yet entertained the spies who went 'out to spy the whole earth, and hid them with her, viz. the Father, 'Son, and Holy Ghost.' And immediately after, commenting on the 'thread of scarlet,' (Josh. ii. 18. 21.) he calls it '*the sign of faith;* which we find referred to in that description contained in Canticles iv. 3. 'thy

Having maturely weighed the arguments above adduced, I leave it for the reader to say, whether the two cases pointed at by *both* apostles, and denominated 'WORKS' by the one, and 'FAITH' by the other, have any the least affinity, with what is termed *moral righteousness*, or 'GOOD WORKS.' Nay, from the instances pitched upon, instances so extraordinary in themselves, and so contrary to the common feelings of parental affection, and of that '*amor patriæ*,' to which philosophy would have all our studies, as well as all our actions directed, I am inclined to think, that the apostle St James meant, in his epistle general, to denude 'GOOD 'WORKS,' in the common acceptation of the term, of *all merit* in accomplishing man's *justification*. Indeed to think otherwise is to derogate from the apostle's character of an *inspired* writer; since to declare, that 'a man is justified by 'WORKS, meaning 'GOOD WORKS,' and to exemplify the declaration, by adducing instances *morally* EVIL, would be to detract from the express assurance of our blessed Lord himself—'howbeit, when he, *the spi-* '*rit of truth, is come*,' (he was *come* long before St James wrote his epistle), 'he *will guide you into* '*all truth*'.' One thing is certain, and supported as

I

'thy lips are like *a thread of scarlet*, viz. *the organ of the church's con-* '*fession*.' See Rom x. 10. Heb. xiii. 15. To the history of Rahab, I would also refer what St Paul says, Heb. xiii. 2. about '*entertaining* '*angels unawares*,' which, I hesitate not to say, is a most ungrammatical translation.

[1] St John xvi. 13.

I am by some of our ablest reformers, and indeed by the highest possible authority, I am bold to affirm, that 'it is the *good man*, that maketh the *good* '*works*, not the *good works* that make the *good man*,' just as it is the *good ground* which produceth the *hundred fold return*, not the hundred fold return which produceth the *good ground*[1]. Nay more, we must wholly reverse our Saviour's figurative reasoning on the *tree* and *its fruit*[2], before we can arrive at any conclusion other than this—that *we must be justified, even in the moral sense of the term, or made righteous, before we can really perform good works, that is, works acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ; and consequently, that good works can have no concern prior to justification, and no merit in effecting the justification of a sinner.*

This comprehends the faith of the united churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland[3], on this most important branch of christian doctrine; being the faith derived from scripture; which, if I have 'marked, learned, and digested' aright, represents man's *justification* as the gratuitous act of divine grace, making us partakers of the righteousness of Christ; which precious gift of divine love we take hold of by faith, antecedent to, but at the same time, *through* GRACE, productive of *such* WORKS as the merciful giver is pleased to reckon 'GOOD;' although

[1] St Luke viii. 8. 15. [2] St. Matth. vii. 15—20. xii. 33.
[3] See Art. XII. and XIII.

[redacted]

though far from completely *perfect*; and without which *works*, the *receiving faith* would lose its acquired hold, and the *annexed grace* become of none effect. This is the sense in which the church wishes its firm belief of *justification by faith* to be understood —by *faith* not operating as the *cause of our justification*, any more than *works*; but as *the instrument* by which, in the apostle's emphatical language—' we ' may apprehend that for which also we are appre- ' hended by Christ Jesus [1].'

LETTER XXXIII.

THE subject of the preceding Letter being of such importance, and so necessary to be well understood by the theological student, I am induced, on that account, to resume it in this Letter. It will not be denied, that it is upon the right understanding of every doctrine, that a right application of the doctrine depends. I come therefore to discuss a topic intimately connected with the doctrine

just

[1] Philip. iii. 12.

just laid down, 'whether and how far the keeping 'of God's commandments is with man a matter of 'possibility.'

It might be thought that, if in any point of religious concern unanimity were to be found, it would be found in a point of such positive injunction, and universal obligation, as man's obedience to the precepts of his God. Yet even here perplexities have occurred, and learned disputations have been agitated, of more hurtful tendency, I fear, in *practice*, than of beneficial tendency in theory. '*The impos-* '*sibility of keeping God's commandments*' is not only common language; but with many *this impossibility* is received as an article of faith. The shorter catechism, as it is termed, of the Westminster Assembly, decisively asserts, 'that no mere man, since 'the fall, is able perfectly in this life to keep the 'commandments of God, but doth daily break 'them, in thought, word, and deed.' Now to say the least, the assertion '*that no mere man is* ABLE' is ambiguously expressed, (whether through inadvertence or design, it matters not), since, if referred, as it may be referred, to the constitution of the commandments of God, it is an assertion manifestly injurious to the goodness of the *master*; while, if referred to the constitution of human nature, it is an assertion sadly discouraging to the exertions of the *servants*. To add to this discouragement, the frequency and extent of the breach comprehended in the clause, '*but doth daily break them, in thought,*

'word,

'*word, and deed*,' may be thought to insinuate the utmost pitch of actual transgression; whereas the apostle's declaration, 'he that offendeth in one 'point is guilty of all[1],' on which the insinuation is built, does not imply the actual *violation of all*; but only that *one offence* makes the offender liable to the penalty of the law[2]. For so the apostle explains himself in the succeeding verse—'if thou commit 'no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a '*transgressor of the law*;' a maxim in every respect confirmed by the practice of all criminal courts.

Indeed the whole of this doctrine of *Inability* does, in my conception, flow from a fallacious theory; and, being founded in error, cannot be but defective in its structure. It sets out with this as a first principle, that man is arrived at the full use of all his faculties, and is thus, on the footing of a servant, entering into the family and service of a strange master, with whom he had previously had no connection, and with the nature of whose work he was altogether unacquainted, nay ignorant of the very will and pleasure of his master, with respect to the work to be performed. In this case, there might perhaps be some ground for the many attending difficulties, and even for the harsh suppositions with which the business in hand is clogged, but

[1] St James ii. 10.

[2] That this is the true meaning of the word ἔνοχος, translated *guilty*, *every* Greek scholar will readily acknowledge.

but which are the natural result of the erroneous principle on which it is founded. Whereas the truly christian scheme, which, I grieve to observe, is in many theological systems too little thought of and attended to, presents us with a view of things wholly different, and places us at once in a state of close and intimate *relation* to the great One, whose precepts we are to obey. It exhibits us, not as *servants* hired into the family of the living God, but as *children* of 'our Father who is in heaven;' being, if not born in the household of faith, yet early called into it, and gradually nourished and instructed in it, under the watchful eye of a loving Father, and with the continued aid of a most affectionate elder brother—being '*joint heirs*' with him, 'if so be that we suffer with him, that we may 'be also glorified together'.' It moreover describes the work, which we have to perform in our heavenly Father's household, not as a grievous load of constrained and impracticable duties, but as a 'service' which is 'perfect freedom,' as a profitable and delightful task which we are to learn, and in which we are daily more and more to improve, from the instructive directions, and with the daily assistance of the same skilful Master, who lays down the rules by which we are to walk, and is still training us up to the practice of them. As *christians* therefore (which designation it is, that constitutes the relation in which we stand, and of which we

[1] Rom. viii. 17.

ought never to lose sight) we are, if I durst say so without being misunderstood, not so much God's *servants*, as we are God's *children*; and, in virtue of that relation, *scholars* of Christ, whose precept is, '*Learn of me*,' and whose apostle has expressly assured us, that 'all scripture is given by inspira-'tion of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for re-'proof, for correction, for instruction in righteous-'ness, that the man of God may be perfect, 'throughly furnished unto all good works[a].' In this character it will appear, that all our labour and application tend principally to our own well-being, our own edification, without in the least profiting *him*, under whose tuition we are placed; and that however pleasing or displeasing our conduct may be to him in the mean time, the greater gain or loss will in the end redound to ourselves. Nay it will follow, that while we are thus under him, who was long ago declared to be a '*teacher come* '*from God*,' it is not to be expected that we shall or that we can attain unto that measure of skill and perfection in 'science' *not* 'falsely so called,' which is to be the study and employment of our whole lives.

Perfection, in the full abstract meaning of the term, is not required of us; as being so far above the lot of mortality, that it is not to be met with here below, in any one undertaking or acquisition what-

[a] 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

whatever. When therefore the Westminster Divines did gravely assert, that 'no mere man is able 'perfectly to keep the commandments of God,' they might as well have said, 'that no man can 'perfectly perform any part of his daily labour;' since it is possible for the human mind to conceive that a more *perfect* mode of performing it might still be found. Yet though a work be not executed *perfectly*, it may be executed to every *useful* purpose, and in an acceptable manner. It may be performed to the profit of the *doer* or *performer*, and to the good pleasure of the *employer*. And this, in the instance now before us, is all that can be looked for.

Much is it therefore to be wished, that this popular doctrine of the '*impossibility of keeping God's* '*commandments*' were less insisted on; or, if insisted on, that it were more securely fenced against *misconstruction*, than experience shews it to be; nay, that the *inability of human nature*, which I am far, very far, from resisting in the general application of the term, were not, as it for the most part is, restricted to '*human inability to discharge the duties which chris-* '*tianity requires.*' For this is the point, to which all reasoning on the subject in hand does naturally tend; and thus tending, the *inference* is but too *possible* to be kept sight of, come of the *premises* what will. Human nature needs more a spur to duty, than a cloak for neglect. To be, from our infancy, taught that we are *not able* to do a thing,

is not the ready method to incite us to make the trial, or to excite our diligence and application, should we be induced to make the trial. This our daily experience testifies; and, in the whole catalogue of apologies for transgression, there is none so common as that of the *frailty* and *weakness of flesh and blood*, which are hourly pled in extenuation of every sin which besets us. True it is that *nature is weak*, but if his power be greater, who is for us, than all that can come against us; if the grace of God be, as it is pronounced to be, 'sufficient for us, 'and his *strength* be made perfect in *weakness*[a], what must become of those who would thus excuse their sins, whether they be sins of *commission*, or sins of *omission*? *Improvement* of every description is progressive. The learner can even discern the effects of his own industry and attention, in every art and science to which he betakes himself. To his comfort and delight he finds, that what at first appeared to him extremely hard, and in a great measure impossible to be either done or acquired, perseverance and studious application render not only easy, but in the end agreeable.

Were I to pursue this train of reasoning, I know well that, in the opinion of some, I should speedily subject myself to the attack of one or other of the parties, who have so long agitated the intricate, and as yet undecided controversy about *Free-will*. For, on the one side, Pelagius and his followers have not

[a] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

not failed to estimate this faculty in man too highly; while Luther and his followers have, I freely own, carried their estimation of it to the contrary extreme. The controversy, however, is so subtle and perplexing; it involves so many metaphysical speculations about *liberty* and *necessity*, under the inapplicable distinction of '*moral* and *physical*,' that my voice is for leaving it to be *agitated* (for *determined*, on this side the grave, it cannot be), in the schools of 'philosophy and vain deceit.' As these abound in this 'age of reason,' it is a subject of debate which is admirably suited to the enlightened votaries of modern philosophy, who afford them their patronage and support: whereas in the school of christianity, such jargon is wholly inadmissible. To know Jesus Christ, and him crucified; to know that he is the Lord, by whom we escape death—this is the acquirement, in comparison of which every other species of science is, by the christian divine, to be accounted loss. It is, on my part, therefore merely necessary to dismiss this controversy, by saying, that every man has assuredly *a will*, as implying, in the general sense of that faculty, a *wish*, or *desire* towards happiness, and towards obtaining happiness by some means or other; however much he may be mistaken as to the *proper means*, and as to the true nature of happiness. But how far he is able to carry this *his will* into accomplishment, from whatever source he possesses it, is a separate question, to which revelation alone can give the answer. And revelation has given a full

full and satisfactory answer, on which the pious christian implicitly rests his faith, without vainly enquiring whether a man's will, in being actuated by motives, or influenced by grace, loses its freedom of action? With many the *irresistibility of grace* is a standard branch of christian doctrine. I hesitate not to say that the expression is *equivocal*, if not a *contradiction in terms*. Before any power can become *irresistible*, it must have recourse to *compulsion* or force. *Grace* however, (χαρις in the Greek) implies a *favour*, or *free gift*, which, like every other gift, must be *received* freely and without compulsion, otherwise it loses the quality of *a gift*. Nay, it must be freely *offered*, and without any merit on the receiver's part, otherwise it becomes *a debt*, and, in that case, would cease to be the 'gift of 'grace.'

This natural consequence produced the scholastic distinction between '*common grace*' and '*efficacious grace*,' 'COMMON,' when it is, or may be *resisted*, and 'EFFICACIOUS,' when it is *irresistible*. You may have heard of the old sophism of '*idem* '*per idem*,' which, if ever appropriately applied, may with the utmost propriety be applied to this species of sophistical quibbling. But it is high time to unfold the sentiments which the church, to which we ourselves belong, entertains upon this subject of never-ending altercation. It is manifest to every one who has looked into the book of Common Prayer, that we both believe, and are required to teach,

teach, that *all* who are duly baptized, whether they be young or old, are by baptism made members of Christ. But, in virtue of this superinduced character, it is equally obvious, that they all receive *something* from Christ, of whom they have become *members: something*, by whatever name it may be distinguished, which contributes to their nourishment and support, some principle of strength and vitality, similar to that which invigorates and supports the members of the body natural—'being 'confident,' as the apostle speaks, 'that he who 'hath *begun a good work in them will perform it, un-* '*til the day of Jesus Christ*';' or, as the same apostle elsewhere expresses it, in terms of strict analogy to the body natural—'until we all come in the 'unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the 'Son of God, unto a *perfect man*, unto the mea-'sure of the stature of the fulness of Christ[2].' The regular christian, therefore, or in other words, *the baptized member of Christ*, is to be viewed in a light, pointing him out as superior to '*a mere man*,' in the common acceptation of that term. He is to be regarded as one belonging to the body of Christ, as 'one growing up unto *him* in all things, which is 'the *head*, even Christ[3];' and, in virtue of that blessed connection, endued with power and ability unknown to the *mere* '*natural* man, who receiv-'eth not the things of the Spirit of God[4].'

It

[1] Philip. i. 6.
[2] Ephes. iv. 13.
[3] Ephes. iv. 15.
[4] 1 Cor. ii. 14.

It is moreover worthy of remark, that what service or obedience we owe as christians, and in terms of the divine œconomy of redemption, we owe immediately to Christ. For, as he tells us, 'If ye *love me*, keep MY commandments[1]:' Which precept, the same inspired historian, who wrote it for our learning, does, in another part of his writings, express in the following language, 'this is the '*love* of *God*, that we keep HIS commandments[2].' No words could more strongly mark St John's sentiments, respecting the *Deity* of his blessed Master than these, since they clearly assert the *love of Christ*, and the *love of God*, to be the same influencing principle, or motive for keeping those commandments, which Christ calls 'HIS,' and the apostle calls 'GOD'S.'

'Bought,' therefore, or in other words, *enlisted*, as we are, into Christ's service, 'with a price[3],' we may confide in his invigorating assistance in every stage of our christian course, or through the whole of 'the race that is set before us.' And this invigorating assistance it is which christians are called upon to confide in, as 'the GRACE that is in Christ 'Jesus[4].' How far this grace, diffused from the head through the body *collectively*, or to the several members *individually*, is, or is not, IRRESISTIBLE, the church to which we belong enquireth not; although

[1] St John xiv. 15. [2] 1 St John v. 3.
[3] 1 Cor. vi. 20. [4] 2 Tim. ii. 1.

though the church does readily acknowledge, that, *upon extraordinary occasions*, and for *answering any immediate purpose of divine wisdom*, He who is the dispenser of *grace*, in general, can give to it what *irresistible* force he pleases. But, in the ordinary course of his dispensations, I hope I speak the words of truth and soberness when I say, that the christian pastor ought strenuously to recommend it to those under his charge, to receive 'the grace by which they are saved[1],' as if it were RESISTIBLE; thankfully to use 'the measure of this gift of 'Christ[2],' which they may have had vouchsafed unto them, and earnestly to pray, that 'the grace 'of our Lord' may to them be 'exceeding abun-'dant, with faith and love which is in Christ Je-'sus[3].'

I have dwelt the longer on this 'hard to be un-'derstood' subject, because there is too much reason to fear, that the two current opinions relative to it—'the impossibility of keeping God's com-'mandments,' and 'the irresistibility of grace,' opinions *not warranted by Scripture*, are, when *practically* viewed, of the most pernicious tendency; the former being a perpetual source of *discouragement*, and the latter an inlet to *security*; against both which enemies of our peace we can never be too carefully guarded. Our gracious Mas-

[1] Ephes. ii. 5. 8. [2] Ephes. iv. 7.
[3] 1 Tim. i. 14.

ter requires no more of mankind in general, or of individual men in particular, than the husbandman requires of his fields, and the vinedresser of his vines, viz. that they bring forth fruit in due season, and according to the culture bestowed. Our obedience therefore not reaching to the extent of the standard prescribed is no objection to the *possibility* of its being brought to this standard. We ought to grow in *grace*, as we grow in *years*, otherwise we are unworthy 'of the vocation wherewith we are 'called.' Yet as some are capable of greater bodily exertion than others; in like manner are some capable of attaining higher degrees of obedience in matters spiritual than others. In every one, however, there ought to be '*a willing mind*;'[1] so that, as the 'strong in Christ' must be, and will be ready to confess, that they 'are not sufficient of 'themselves to think any thing as of themselves',' the weak may with comfort and confidence say, that 'through 'Christ, who strengtheneth them[2],' they shall be enabled to 'do *all* things' which he requires of them, or expects from them; *all* in short, which, in our present state, is compatible with the imperfection of our constitution, or which is attainable by our best endeavours.

LET-

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 5. [2] Philip. iv. 13.

LETTER XXXIV.

WHAT has hitherto been offered in the way of instruction to the lovers of christian science leads us now to the consideration of the most abstruse, and most difficult to be apprehended, of all the theological dogmas. I mean the much laboured doctrine of PREDESTINATION: a doctrine which, however clear and comfortable, even in its most rigid form, it has been pronounced by its numerous abettors, yet appears to me, when viewed in that form, to be a doctrine of a very different aspect indeed, and which, I am not ashamed to confess, I cannot behold as either '*clear*' in itself, or '*comfortable*' in its relation to man. Undoubtedly '*predestinate*' is a scripture term [1]. 'Whom he did foreknow, he 'also did *predestinate* to be conformed to the image 'of his Son,' &c. asserts St Paul. And this assertion it is which constitutes the foundation-stone of that enormous fabric, which contending sects have reared on this thorny ground. Nay, as if this single text embraced the whole system of christianity, it has been dignified by the ridiculous appel-

[1] Rom. viii. 29, 30.

lation of 'the believer's golden chain.' But, whether the verb 'προορίζω,' to which so much importance is attached, be fit of itself, or be designed by the apostle to claim that importance, ought, in my opinion, to have been looked into with more exactness of enquiry than seems to have been bestowed upon it. That the apostle made use of it with a view to the eternal happiness purchased for us by Christ, the church to which we belong does most readily acknowledge, and piously believe. But that he meant any such doctrine to be conveyed by the term, as modern *predestinarians* have chosen to draw from it, is quite another matter; and what no christian ought to receive, until more and better evidence be adduced than I have yet seen offered in its support. St Paul speaks much of 'an eternal 'purpose,' 'an everlasting covenant,' 'an eternal 'promise[1];' expressions which the apostle's current doctrine

[1] Ephes. iii. 11. Heb. xiii. 20. Tit. i. 2. We first meet the verb 'προορίζω' in Acts iv. 28. It is there very properly translated '*determined* '*before*'—'Herod and Pontius Pilate,' says St. Peter, 'with the Gen-'tiles, and *the people of Israel* were gathered together, for to do whatso-'ever thy hand, and thy *counsel determined before* to be done.' The apostle, in this passage, may be considered as repeating what he had previously asserted, (Acts ii. 23.) 'Him' (that is Christ) 'being deli-'vered by the *determinate counsel* and *forcknowledge* of God, *ye*' (the people of Israel) 'have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and 'slain.' How completely does this text develope the apostle's sense of the verb προορίζω? True, it was '*determined before*' that Christ should suffer by the *wicked hands* of 'the people of Israel,' yet were they not *predestined* (in the sense of Calvin and his followers) to the commission of this barbarously ungrateful act. Else, how are we to reconcile such

pre-

doctrine, and his manner of arguing in other parts of his writings, induce a belief in my mind, that he

predestined murder with our Saviour's own declaration, (John x. 18.), 'No one taketh my life from me, but *I lay it down of myself;* I HAVE 'POWER TO LAY IT DOWN, AND I HAVE POWER TO TAKE IT AGAIN. Nay, had not those who were gathered together, for to do whatsoever the Lord's 'hand and his counsel *determined before* to be done,' been free and responsible agents, how can we account for the blessed Jesus' praying to his Father in their behalf—'*Father, forgive them,*' &c. Besides, it ought not to be overlooked, that *scriptural predestination* is far from meaning '*indefectibility of grace*' (as many would have us believe) in the individual christian. Even the very texts which are brought forward in support of this meaning, (Ephes. i. 4. 5.) 'According as he 'hath chosen *us* in him before the foundation of the world, that *we* '*should be holy*, and *without blame* before him in love; having *predes-* '*tinated us unto the adoption of children* by Jesus Christ.' &c. when compared with the same apostle's language in another of his epistles, do by no means justify such a meaning. For to the *Israelites* 'pertained 'the *adoption*' (υἱοθεσία, the very privilege to which St Paul tells his *Ephesians* they were *predestined)* 'and the glory, and the covenants,' &c. (Rom. ix. 4.) Yet so far were the Israelites from *individually* or *collectively* enjoying an *absolute* and *unconditional* election to eternal life, that the same apostle, St Paul, whose words are wrested by so many to their destruction, does explicitly affirm, 'that it was through *the* '*fall of this very people* that salvation came unto us 'Gentiles;' adding, in words sufficiently decisive of the point at issue—'Behold therefore 'the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, *severity*, but 'towards *thee goodness*, IF THOU CONTINUE IN THAT GOODNESS,' (a provision this worse than absurd, if Calvin's *unconditional election be the truth*), '*otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*'—(Rom. xi. 22.) It will, I am aware, be said that St Paul himself has obviated this objection, by affirming, 'that there was a remnant' (of Israel) '*according to the* '*election of grace.*' In like manner will there be a *remnant of the Gentile church*, when the Son of man cometh; since, although at *this* his second coming, it is a *matter of doubt* expressed by the Son of Man himself, 'whether *he shall find faith upon the earth*, (Luke xviii. 8.), it is a *matter of certainty*, 'that the gates of hell shall not *prevail*,' at

any

he used them, and of course the term '*predestinate*,' in a general and unrestricted sense: So that on the apostle's principles, I think we have every ground to believe, that *predestination*, in the scriptural acceptation, has a reference to, or rather is the same with the '*eternal purpose*,' '*promise*,' '*covenant of mercy*,' and '*redemption*;' and, by consequence, is as universally comprehensive as I believe the gracious scheme of redemption to be, that is, *universal* in the intention, however *partial* in the execution. Nay, I am ready, on the same apostolical authority to say, that the '*election*' or *choosing*, so frequently mentioned in the sacred volume, does not necessarily imply an absolute and predetermined exclusion of others from the general blessing to which '*election*' gives us access; but may and does denote a particular, and even *arbitrary* preference (for particular reasons and with particular views) of *some* above *others*. The distribution of the *talents*, in our Saviour's parable [1], and the *different degrees of glory* to which St Paul refers, when treating of the resurrection of the dead [2], are sufficient evidence of the correctness of this opinion; since

any period, 'against' the christian church—(St Matth. xvi. 18). But who dares say, that such and such *individuals* are *predestinated* to belong to the Gentile remnant? The *Scripture* is totally silent; and unless it speaks so plain, that 'he who runs may read,' our wisdom is to distrust the traditions of men, which have in many instances rendered God's word of none effect.—'Let him, who *thinketh he standeth*, take 'heed lest he fall.'

[1] St Matt. xxv. 14—30. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 41.

since to every servant was allowed *some portion of talent*, and to every *star some ray of glory*. It is besides an opinion daily sanctioned by the common modes of speech, which admit of our saying 'a *choice* person,' 'a *choice* servant,' 'a *choice* thing 'of any kind,' without suggesting the *exclusion* of *other persons*, of *other servants*, of *other things of any kind*.

Having thus far premised, I feel it incumbent upon me, though not without a due share of reluctance, to enter into a brief discussion of a doctrine which has been countenanced by so many eminent men, and which has employed the pens of so many polemical writers, both ancient and modern, lest it should be said, that I had left the young and inexperienced reader to grope his way through this LABYRINTH of controversial divinity, with which the *Egyptian*, *Cretan*, *Lemnian*, and *Italian* LABYRINTHS of Pliny are, for their intricacy, unworthy of comparison.

I have already insinuated, that in the early ages of christianity, the more reputable modes of the heathen philosophy, especially the *Platonic* mode, had no small influence with many, in the opinions which they formed of most of the leading doctrines of christianity. In the present instance, it is my firm conviction that heathen philosophy will be found to have biassed the opinions of men; and, that another system, viz. the system of the *Stoics*, will

will be discovered to have intruded itself into the œconomy of our redemption, and to have afforded the ground-work of *predestination;* first, as received in the Latin church, and lastly, as wrought into its present form. Even its fondest modern abettors dare not deny, that there is, to say the least, a visible likeness between the principal tenets of the *predestinarian* and of the *stoic.* The *stoics* placed all events under an *absolute decree*; which the Latin branch of the sect termed FATE or DESTINY. *Predestinarians* build their faith upon such a *decree;* with this difference indeed, that in the *stoic system,* it is the *decree* which binds the *gods,* whereas in the predestinarian system, it is *God* who bindeth *men by his decree.* Still however it is *fatality* which ruleth, and to which mortal man is held to be subject; and, in both systems, the *decree* is equally beyond the reach of his discovery.

Among the writers of the first three centuries, whether Greeks or Latins, whether orthodox or heretical, the doctrine, as now received, holds but an inconsiderable place. The Fathers of these primitive ages were otherwise occupied. They found sufficient employment in combating the errors of blind idolatry, and in fortifying the disciples of Christ against *heresy* and *persecution,* to both of which they were daily exposed. To devote either their time or their talents to abstruse speculations, and to the unprofitable work of prying into the deep arcana of unrevealed decrees, was thus completely

pletely foreign to their views of christian edification. Even Origen, the most inquisitive, and, in some respects, the most fanciful of his contemporaries, has said little on the subject of the divine decrees, in such remnants of his voluminous writings as have reached our times; while the little that is to be found seems rather to lean to the opposite side. The doctrine of predestination, therefore, attracted in no respect the particular attention of theologians, until the time of our countryman *Pelagius*, who flourished towards the end of the fourth century, and whose principles were so inimical to the doctrine of *grace*, as then received by the christian church, that it roused the attention of *Jerom* and *Augustine*, and incited these two great champions of the faith to search more narrowly into a matter which had, for the first time, assumed an important aspect. Thus it was in the management of the Pelagian controversy, that the word 'PREDESTINATION' seems to have been slipped in, to guard against the extravagant LIBERTY which the Pelagians impiously asserted; in corroboration of which opinion, we find a contemporary writer, *Tiro Prosper*, affirming in his Chronicon, 'that *the 'new heresy* of the *predestinarians* had arisen from '*misunderstanding Augustine's books.*' At the same time, the rigours which appeared in *Jerom's* and *Augustine's* system of argumentation having been discovered, were attempted to be moderated by the monk *Cassian*, a disciple of *St Chrysostom*; who, in his book '*Of Conferences,*' and upon this very

subject, took a middle course between the *operations of grace*, and the *freedom of will*, and has had many followers and able defenders. To Cassian and his followers, the rigid party gave, on this account, the invidious appellation of *Semipelagians*.

For some time however, the controversy in a manner slept; or, if any chose to revive it, they shewed a slight inclination to the side espoused by St Augustine; being influenced by his unceasing labours, and profound piety. The ninth century was the period in which the flame was rekindled. For then was the doctrine of *predestination*, in all its modern rigour, espoused by the monk *Godeschale*, who, altho' on that account severely handled by his bishop, *Hincmar* of *Rheims*, was, on the same account, warmly supported by *Remigius* of *Lyons*, and other prelates. Some councils were held in these parts, for the purpose of deciding the matter; notwithstanding which it continued to agitate the churches for a considerable space of time. There is a period, however, when disputes do *naturally* subside. Accordingly it happened, that even the violence of this controversy abated; insomuch that, from the ninth century, it may be said to have been dormant for no shorter period than 300 years, until the *scholastic* divinity, of which Peter Lombard, of Paris, was the inventor, came to be in universal esteem over all the west. Then it was, that the far famed *Thomas Aquinas*, a friar of the Dominican order, not only maintained the doctrine of *predestination* in its utmost extent, averring it to be the doctrine of *St*

Augus-

Augustine, but also added many subtle inventions of his own. By his novel, not to call it nonsensical, distinction of '*sensu composito*, and *sensu divino*,' (a distinction which I do not pretend to *translate*, much less to *understand*), his endeavour was to reconcile the freedom of the *will*, with the *predetermination* of an *absolute divine decree*; while, in order to remove the ugly consequence with which this doctrine has ever been charged (whether *justly* or otherwise, I stop not at present to prove), he distinguishes between the *act of sin*, which, being something *positive*, *could be produced*, and the *evil of sin*, which, being something *negative*, *could not be produced*, and *could not* therefore be of *God's doing*. Surely the futility and danger of such metaphysical quibbling, when employed on a subject so sacred, has only to be mentioned to be severely reprobated.

The laboured system of the *Angelic Doctor*, as *Thomas Aquinas* was called, soon met with an opponent well qualified to contest with him its merits, in the celebrated *John Duns Scotus*, of the coeval order of Franciscans, denominated the *Subtle Doctor*. This intrepid Scotchman (whether from the impulse of conviction, or rather from that spirit of rivalship which existed between the Dominican and Franciscan orders, it is not easy to decide) boldly denied all the postulates of *Aquinas*, and confuted his positions on the subject of *absolute decrees*, with much acuteness, and a due proportion

of animosity. The order of *Jesuits*, on its institution, declared itself of the Dominican side of the question; and *Cardinal Bellarmine*, said to be the best man of their order, adhered to it all his life. The Jesuits, however, as a body, shortly espoused the Franciscan principles, to which they did not fail to subjoin some peculiar casuistry of their own. In a little time, (after the influence of the disciples of Loyola, at the papal court, began to be alarming), started up the order of *Jansenists*; who, out of spite to the *Jesuists*, revived *St Augustine's* doctrine, in all its branches, and with all its disgusting consequences. That they might succeed in their project the more effectually, the *Jansenists*, with great industry and fidelity, published a voluminous collection of *Augustine's* sentiments on the subject of *predestination*; which, after much wrangling, the *Jesuits* succeeded in getting the Pope himself to condemn, though it was still declared at Rome, that nothing to the prejudice of *Augustine's* doctrine was intended. And thus, in the church of Rome, do matters stand to this day; the *Dominican* and *Jansenist* orders taking the *rigid* side of the *predestinarian* controversy; the *Franciscan* and *Jesuit* orders the other; while the *infallibility* of the Pontiff is sustained, by his warily keeping aloof from both parties, and either not *caring*, or not *daring* to determine where the truth lies.

Among those who embraced the *Reformation*, things, I am sorry to say, with respect to this doctrine,

trine, are not on a much better footing. *Luther* having been an *Augustinian* monk, and early taught to reverence his patron's great reputation, clung stedfastly to *St Augustine's* predestinarian sentiments, and used every endeavour to instil them into others. These sentiments, however, his fellow-labourer, *Melancthon*, as carefully disavowed, and openly retracted the doctrine which flowed from them. For this conduct, *Luther* never blamed him; and the consequence has been, that since that period, the Lutheran church has adhered to what is called the Semipelagian hypothesis, and has betrayed a '*zeal*,' perhaps not altogether 'according to 'knowledge,' against the other persuasion.

John Calvin, the other illustrious foreign reformer, having carried *St Augustine's* sentiments to a height even beyond what the Dominicans had done, fixed his notion of *predestination* in the lapsed state of mankind *after* the fall; and declared it to be his belief, that God, having *decreed* to save *some*, by means of a Saviour, left the *rest* to the miserable consequences of that fall, without any capability of being benefited by all the offers of grace, made to them in common with others. Yet, dissatisfied with *Calvin's* unscriptural attempt to improve on *Augustine's* faith, his colleague and successor, *Beza*, carried the effects of God's absolute decrees up to the period *before* the fall; and taught, that the Deity did, from all eternity, decree the sin of Adam, the lapse of his posterity, and the death of Christ;

Christ; together with 'the *salvation*,' or '*damna-*
'*tion*' of such persons, as should, by their fate in either way, contribute most to his glory: All of whom shall continue in grace, or in sin, and so be saved, or damned, in virtue of this eternal and irreversible decree. This strange flight of *Beza's* imagination was, shortly after his death, affirmed by the Synod of Dort to be the standard of doctrine, on this head, to all *calvinistic* protestants. In the Scottish 'Confession of Faith,' which the '*Lords* '*of the congregation*,' as they chose to denominate themselves, presented to Parliament in 1560, this Article is however expressed with due moderation. All that they have said regarding it, is contained in their eighth chapter of Election, and is as follows: 'The same eternal God, who, *of mere grace*, '*elected us in Christ Jesus his Son, before the founda-*
'*tion of the world was laid.*' There occur two or three other places, where the terms *elect* and *reprobate* are introduced; but still in such general language as Scripture warrants, and such as no unprejudiced christian need to take offence at. Nay, considering the influence which the famous *John Knox*, the slavish admirer of *Calvin*, and of all his nostrums, had over the compilers, it is truly matter of surprize, that through the whole of this '*Confession of Faith*,' there does not occur one such term as 'PREDESTINATION.' The consequence was, that in all the various forms which the Scottish Reformation assumed, this Confession was received, as containing the sum and substance of revealed truth.

truth. When episcopacy was regularly established in Scotland, anno 1610, it became the creed of the church, as was acknowledged by the Scotch Bishops in their *Declinator* (as it was termed) against the rebellious assembly of Glasgow, in the year 1638, and even at the restoration of episcopacy, anno 1661, this very '*Confession*' was restored to its former authority, as appears from the language of the Test-act of 1681, which enforces the due observance of it.

The church of England, in framing her XXXIX Articles of Religion, to which, in common with that church, the episcopal church of Scotland does now adhere, although in the XVIIth Article, '*Of Predestination* and *Election*,' the description is somewhat fuller than that which the Scottish reformers had subscribed two years before, cannot, as has been frequently shewn, with any degree of propriety be regarded as countenancing the doctrine of *Calvin*; since, though building on *Augustine's* foundation, the church of England is most *cautious* in expressing its belief, and restricts God's promises to the *general* tenour of Holy Scripture; since not a word is said of *reprobation*; and since the whole body of occasional offices, in the book of Common Prayer, is found to express the sentiments of the church to be of a different stamp from the sentiments of *Calvin*. For some time after the Reformation, the church of Ireland seems to have leaned to the rigid side of the predestinarian controversy; until that,

that, under the administration of the Earl of Strafford, in 1634, the Irish church was prevailed upon to adopt the Articles of the church of England, along with its own. The subscription of its clergy was therefore for a while required to both; but it is now thought sufficient, that they subscribe the XXXIX Articles of the United Church of England and Ireland.

Of all the councils or synods which, since the æra of the Reformation, have ever assembled for the purpose of establishing a standard of protestant belief, that motley meeting of creed-makers, which sat down at Westminster, in 1643, and which was honoured by the attendance of six commissioners from the Scotch *covenanters*, went the most roundly and boldly to work, in expressing their sentiments on the deep and dark subject of *predestination*. In the third chapter of their '*Confession of Faith*,' entitled 'Of God's eternal Decree,' these violent reformers are not afraid to declare, that, 'by the 'decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, 'some men and angels are predestinated to ever-'lasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlast-'ing death, who are thereby so particularly and un-'changeably designed, and their number so certain 'and definite, that it cannot be either increased or 'diminished[1]:' and, in the seventh Article, their opinion is thus daringly declared—'The rest of 'mankind

[1] See Westminster Confession, ch. III. Art. 3. and 4.

'mankind God was pleased' (not only as Calvin at first taught), '*to pass by*,' (but as Beza further avowed), 'and to *ordain* them to dishonour and 'wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious 'justice'.' How the framers of this '*Confession*' intended that its doctrines should be applied, we may learn from a sermon preached about that time before the House of Commons, in London, by Mr Robert Baillie, one of the Scottish Commissioners, and the one, of the whole party, whose good sense and moderation were prized the most. This reverend gentleman, taking occasion to quote our Saviour's prayer for his enemies, '*Father, for-*'*give them*,' &c. had the boldness, I might have said, the blasphemous impiety, thus to restrict the language of the prayer—'Father, forgive them—'saith Christ, of MANY of his crucifiers!' Besides the freedom so arrogantly taken with the words of him 'who spoke as never man spake,' this restriction, introduced by Mr Baillie, may be said to include two very unwarrantable suppositions:—first, That there were of the *eternal elect* among Christ's very crucifiers. And secondly, That there were some of his enemies, for whom he, 'who taketh away the '*sin of the world*,' and enjoined his disciples to pray for their most despiteful enemies, had not even common charity. This 'Westminster Confession 'of Faith' was first sanctioned in that rebellious English Parliament, whose acts and deeds can

[1] See Westminster Confession, ch. III. Art. 7.

never be forgotten, while there is a sovereign on the throne of these realms. It soon fell into merited disuse in England; but in Scotland, to the utter exclusion of the former *Confession of Faith*, already noticed, it was read and ratified in the Parliament of 1690; and continues, with all the rigours of *reprobation*, to be the enjoined doctrinal standard of the Scottish establishment to this day.

LETTER XXXV.

HAVING in the preceding Letter given a brief historical detail of the doctrine of '*predestination*,' from its first simple appearance about the time of Augustine, till the period of its assuming that variety of human devices, which at last invested it with all the horrors of *reprobation*, I shall not attempt, in resuming the subject, to argue against this darling article of Calvinistic divinity, from the dangerous consequences flowing from it—consequences which have wrought the temporal, and, I fear, the eternal ruin of thousands of the human race. For such

is

is the infatuation which attends the *predestinarian*, strictly so called, that he either does not see, or, if he does see, will not admit the destructive tendency of his creed; much less acknowledge, that like the corrupt tree, it is to be known by its fruits—by the *most presumptive security*, or the *most frantic despair*. What I mean to offer to the theological student's particular notice, in this Letter, is that perversion of Scripture, which marks the character of the complete *predestinarian*. Thus to stamp his system of divine *reprobation* with the necessary validity, he adduces the instances of Cain, of Esau, of Pharaoh, of Saul, &c. as so many cases in point; withdrawing them from the *particular* relation which they evidently have to the œconomy of revealed truth, and appropriating them to the *general* relation, which they evidently have *not*, to the case of mankind at large; while, at the same time, there is nothing in the instances of Cain, of Esau, of Pharaoh, of Saul, &c. on which *an eternal decree* of damnation can, after all, be founded.

Even in the case of Pharaoh, apparently a case more in point than any other, although it be expressly said, that Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart, neither the context, nor the mode of expression, requires that we carry this *obduracy of heart back* to God's eternal decree, or *forward* to Pharaoh's future state. This *obduracy* of his heart appears to have been interposed for a *particular* purpose—even to further the design for which Jehovah 'had raised

'*him* up'; which design would not have been so fully or so gloriously accomplished, if Pharaoh (as he had once and again undertaken to do) had let the people go on a first or second application. And wherefore was it that Jehovah prevented him? Was it not *to shew in him (individually) his power, and that his name might be declared throughout all the earth?*

On this subject, I feel myself called upon to observe, though with much regret, that our venerable translators, by the liberties taken in rendering certain texts, have countenanced some of those peculiar principles of the foreign reformers, which, it would appear, they were not averse from avowing; though I must not say, that they did avow them to any extent. I shall merely instance the two following proofs. When in the beginning of several of St Paul's epistles, he addresses himself κλητοις 'αγιοις—'to those,' literally, 'CALLED SAINTS,' the English version has it 'CALLED TO BE SAINTS:' This rendering imposes a very different sense on the apostle's words; and points to what is termed '*effectual calling*,' as distinguished from '*common call-*'*ing*.' Again, when St Paul says, 'the just man 'shall live by faith, but if *he* draw back, 'ο δε δικαιος 'εκ πιστεως ζησεται· και εαν 'υποστειληται[2],' &c. our translators have rendered it, 'if any man draw back,' &c. that they might ingeniously provide against the sup-

[1] Exod. ix. 16. [2] Heb. x. 38.

supposition of apostacy or drawing back in *a justified believer.*

These, and such like petty interpolations, tho' easily discovered by him who *searches the scriptures* as they were originally written, do yet escape, as it is meant that they should escape, the notice of the generality of readers, and no doubt contribute greatly to confirm them in the belief of the doctrine now under discussion. So much for the occasional slips of men, who notwithstanding were eminently qualified for the task prescribed to them; and who have, on the whole, produced a version of the Scriptures, superior to any of which Europe can boast, or which the world ever saw. As to those texts which have been brought forward in opposition to the arguments of the *predestinarian*, it is, to every serious enquirer, a matter of just surprise, not to say indignation, to witness the forced and confined interpretations which have been, and which at this day are put upon them, in order to do away or evade their plain and literal meaning. Thus where St Paul says, 'that God our Saviour 'wills ALL MEN to be saved'[1]; and again, 'that 'Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for ALL[2],' the *predestinarian*, by as nice a piece of sophistry as ever Jesuit produced, would have, in both these texts, the word 'ALL' to signify 'SOME *of all* '*sorts*;' forgetting, or rather, it would seem, not willing

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 4. [2] 1 Tim. v. 6.

willing to remember the parallel, which St Paul himself stated on this important subject—'as *one* '*offence* brought ALL men into condemnation, so '*one righteousness* has brought ALL men unto justi-'fication of life';' thus completely excluding the worse than fanciful restriction of the word ALL to mean a *part* only. Nor ought it to escape our notice, that this *direct exclusion* of the *predestinarian's customary* mode of interpretation is the act and deed of that same apostle from *whom*, and is recorded in that very epistle of his to the Romans, from *which* he (the predestinarian) attempts to draw his favourite tenet—that tenet which besets him in every thought, word, and action of his life. But to have done with these *partial* remarks, which have been often and copiously urged, to the no small disquiet of the *elect*, there are three *general* considerations which operate, in my humble judgement, as insuperable objections to the doctrine in hand.

First—Wherever *predestination*, with its two handmaids, *election* and *reprobation*, is cherished, all other theological attainments are good for nothing. Like the lean kine of old, this one dogma eats up and devours every thing connected with the *doctrine* or *discipline* of the christian church. It leaves no room for discussion, no place for enquiry. It allows no examination of its intrinsic or extrinsic merits. It silences all argument; and locks up not only

[1] Rom. v. 18.—See the Greek original.

only the intellectual powers, but even the christian graces, in a prison-house of one's own erection. Whether the imagination leads to the *elect*, or to the *reprobate* side of the doctrine, the effect is the same. The votary of *fate irreversible* becomes, like the 'deaf adder,' proof against all the '*charms*' of persuasion, refusing to hear the voice of '*mercy* and '*of truth* met together,' let that voice '*charm* never so '*wisely*.' This is not an opinion hastily formed; for, if we adduce all or any of the several distinguishing doctrines of our holy religion—doctrines of a practical, or of a controversial nature, doctrines which have for their object, the *mental* or the *moral* improvement of man; and, if we present them to the *predestinarian* for his judgement of their respective merits, we shall find him ready to assign them, one and all, to the touchstone of God's *secret* and *irreversible decree*; insomuch, that the very *positive institutions* of christianity shall be denuded of their gracious efficacy, unless a man shall have previously obtained *his own consent* to his being in a state of grace, and shall have *enrolled himself in the number of the elect*.

The second consideration is, that the scheme of the *predestinarian* is different from that *scheme*, nay, even *contrary* to that *scheme*, which the Scripture, as we have seen, holds out to us; viz. the œconomy of man's redemption, founded upon the 'everlasting 'covenant' of grace and mercy, into which the co-equal and co-eternal *Three*, in the unity of *one Jehovah*,

hovah, did enter, for us men, and for our salvation. No doubt the scheme of the *predestinarian* is founded upon what he is pleased to call the '*eternal decree of* GOD; but *what* or *whom* the *predestinarian* means by his '*decreeing* God,' we are never by him distinctly told—whether he means the 'SUPREME BEING,' whom the votary of the religion of nature has fabricated to himself; whether the *sole* ONE God, whom the Unitarian worships; or whether he means the TRIUNE God, the JEHOVAH ALEIM of revelation. For my own part, the cloven foot of *Socinianism* is to me so visible in this, I shall not say *designedly* restricted mode of expression, that I have ever, on this account, viewed the doctrine which countenances it with becoming abhorrence. Even when the *predestinarian* is constrained to treat of *Christ* and the *Holy Spirit*, as connected with *Deity*, they are represented, for the most part, not as *partners* and *coadjutors* with the '*decreeing God*,' but rather as his '*agents*,' and '*instruments*'—the *executors*, in short, of the respective parts assigned to them by the *absolute decree* of GOD'S single and supreme will. This semblance of *inferiority*, although justifiable in its application to the second person in the holy Trinity, in so far as his *assumed humanity* will justify it, ought by no means to be admitted as being applicable to the holy Spirit, to whom no such assumption, and of course no such semblance of inferiority belongs: And when, in addition to all this, it is remembered what spirit Calvin was of, (the first moulder of *predestination*

nation into its rigid form), who, notwithstanding his professions of orthodoxy, had the audacity to say, that the fourth petition of our excellent Litany, 'O holy, blessed and glorious Trinity,' &c. '*barbariem sapit*,' SAVOURED OF BARBARISM; and when the modes of expression, which his followers make use of, are compared with their master's audacious language, something beyond *suspicion* will be found to justify me in presenting the reader with this second *objection* to the doctrine which requires, or even seems to require, conformity with the errors of Faustus Socinus.

The third consideration, which will be found to operate as an insuperable objection to the doctrine of *predestination*, respects the very *basis* on which it stands; a basis which, though plausible in the extreme, and most congenial with the sentiments of the pious and devout mind, is, for reasons which I shall here assign, not altogether adapted to sustain such a fabric. The divine decree of election and reprobation is said to be—'for the manifestation of God's GLORY, and for the *glory* of his sovereign power over his creatures.' The GLORY *of God* I hold to be the same with his 'ESSENCE,' and consequently to be above our conceptions; in which case, God's 'GLORY' is clearly something incapable of *addition* or *diminution* from any such cause as the happiness or misery of his creatures. There is perhaps, in the whole compass of revealed truth, no part more misunderstood, or more frequently

misapplied, than the scriptural term 'THE GLORY OF 'GOD.' Its occurring so often in the Old Testament, and the illustrations of it which the New Testament affords [1], do clearly prove it to be something superior to the ideas commonly entertained of it, as synonimous with '*honour*,' '*renown*,' '*grandeur*,' &c. These illustrations point out the 'glory' to be something which *appeared*, *which could be seen*, and even *looked upon*; something by which JEHOVAH made himself visible to man, and therefore something a-kin to *light*, *splendour*, *effulgence*, &c. and which, being sensible and substantial, had no relation to any *quality*, *perfection*, or what we term *attribute*; consequently void of all relation to man, and in no way to be, by him, either increased or diminished. On the other hand, there is in Deity a quality or attribute—a quality revealed to our great and endless comfort; of which, by the allowed rule of analogy, we can have an adequate conception. That quality is 'MERCY,' the darling attribute of the Most High, and the most attractive ornament in *his* crown, who is *King of Kings* and Lord of Lords. On *this* it is that all flesh ought *primarily* and *ultimately* to depend. For *this* it is in which we are immediately concerned; since it was for the display of his *mercy* that God did originally form man. God, it must be allowed, would have been for ever '*glorious*' in himself, and in the contemplation of his own essential perfections, (let the epithet

[1] St John i. 14. ii. 11. xii. 41. Heb. i. 3. Revel. xxi. 23.

thet *glorious* be received in its common acceptation), although no such thing as *creation* had ever taken place, and although *creation* itself were instantly annihilated. But I apprehend that I am warranted in advancing *this*, as an incontrovertible truth, that God could not be, or could not have ever been a '*merciful Being*,' without the existence of some created being, nay more, of some offending creature, to be the happy object of the most lovely and endearing of his attributes. If therefore the transactions of eternity are traced back, '*a parte ante*,' as the schoolmen speak, and if Jehovah is found making an eternal decree on man's account, it is certainly more characteristic to say of such a decree, that it was framed 'for the manifestation of 'the MERCY,' than 'for the manifestation of the 'GLORY of God;' which, in the scriptural import of that term, requires no such manifestation. And how far a *decree of mercy* is removed from every thing under the name of '*reprobation*,' I shall submit to the very teachers of this reprobating doctrine, who, I should think, would find some difficulty in reconciling it to the first article of their catechetical instruction, couched in these terms— 'Man's chief end is to GLORIFY God, and to enjoy 'him for ever.'

Upon the whole, as the church is, on the one hand, careful not to widen the '*way of life*,' which Christ himself has declared to be '*narrow*';[s] neither,

[s] Matt. vii. 13.

ther, on the other hand, must any attempt be made to *narrow* the extent of the Redeemer's merits, by limiting the objects of his *mercy*, much less to plead the authority of an *eternal*, but *unrevealed decree* for such limitation. How properly, therefore, has the church affixed to its article of *Predestination*, a solemn warning to the '*curious*' and '*carnal*,' against this 'most dangerous downfal,' of having it continually before their eyes; when even the hardy assembly at Westminster was obliged to confess, that 'the doctrine of this high mystery 'of *predestination* is to be handled with special 'prudence and care!' How much better is it therefore for the christian pastor to be wholly silent on this deeply mysterious subject, than, by any weak attempt at explaining it from the pulpit, to hazard the souls of those for whom Christ died! 'God's promises' must be received by clergy and laity, 'in such wise as they are generally set forth 'to us in holy Scripture; and, in our doings, 'that WILL of God is to be followed, which we 'have expressly declared to us in the word of 'God.' No *promise of God* is however more clearly set forth in holy Scripture than this, that 'God our Saviour WILL HAVE (θελει) ALL MEN to 'be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the 'truth[1].' Such an express declaration as this, was there none other, ought to satisfy every one calling himself a christian: And, were people once so satis-

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 4.

satisfied, they would have abundant scope for edification, without plunging into the unrevealed secrets—the '*hidden things*' of either *prior* or *future* eternity. They would never, from a preposterous and most unbecoming curiosity, 'seek to be wise above what is written;' but would always remember the distinction which Moses laid down in such cases, 'the *secret things* belong unto the Lord 'our God, but those *things which are revealed* be-'long unto us, and to our children for ever, that 'we may *do all the words of this law*[1].'

[1] Deut. xxix. 29.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

POLEMICAL writing may afford the means of whetting an author's ingenuity; but it never can afford him the means of mental gratification, if he be actuated only by a wish to edify the reader, and not by the mere ambition of beating down his opponent. I rejoice therefore, that the polemical discussions which, in conformity with the design of these Letters, I have been obliged to lay before my readers, are now almost at an end; and that a clearer, and more universally comfortable subject of theological contemplation now presents itself under the appellation of WORSHIP. True it is, that even this important and interesting object of religious enquiry has occasioned considerable difference of sentiment in the christian world; yet, as all bearing the christian name seem to agree with respect to the propriety of paying homage to the God of heaven and of earth, I do not class this branch of christian science with articles of polemical theology.

'WORSHIP,' in my idea, is that early Institution of divine appointment, by which mankind, in their pre-

present state of trial and probation, have access to Jehovah, and communication with him, the only true God. The object and design of this divine Institution are clearly pointed out and warranted in Scripture; and, although external modes and circumstances have varied by appointment of the original Institutor, and may still vary in such lighter matters, as the church shall deem requisite to the maintenance of '*decency and order*,' yet ought the general nature, and sole object of divine worship in the church of God, to be considered as remaining, like God himself, 'the same yesterday, to-day, and 'for ever.'

The sole object of religious *worship*, and HE, to whom alone it ought to be addressed, is JEHOVAH ALEIM, the LORD GOD—of Moses and of the prophets, the God of revelation, the God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; and HE is to be thus addressed without the least intervention or participation of any *creature*, *saint*, or *angel*, in the name and thro' the mediation of Jesus Christ, he being the only advocate with the Father[1], and the one, the alone Mediator between God and man[2].

The primary intention or design of worship, in as far as the worshipper is concerned, and *farther* I mean not to enquire, is for obtaining from the *everflowing* and *overflowing* Fountain of all goodness,

[1] 1 St John ii. 1. [2] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

ness, through the blessed channel of covenanted mediation, all the gifts, graces, mercies, and blessings, which Almighty Power has in store, which infinite wisdom sees that we stand in need of, and which unbounded goodness shall be pleased to bestow upon us. In this aggregate view of the subject, (and it is the only view which will ever administer to christian edification), *Worship* may be considered in its two branches, viz. *private* worship, performed by individual christians, for their own individual benefit; and *public* worship, performed by a collection, or congregation of persons, assembled for the purpose of *collectively*, as well as *individually*, benefiting each other, in terms of our Lord's encouraging declaration, 'Where two or three are 'gathered together in my name, there am I in 'the midst of them [1].'

It is to this conjunct, social, and congregational act, to which I would, in this Letter, direct the reader's attention, as that which, in strict propriety, deserves the name of '*Public Worship*;' in giving a concise definition of which, I know not where I should find language so appropriate as the language of the church, in the introductory exhortation to our invaluable Liturgy; where we are duly informed, that 'our being assembled and 'met together, is to acknowledge our sins before 'God, to render thanks for the great benefits which we

[1] St Matth. xviii. 20.

'we have received at his hands, to set forth his 'most worthy praise, to hear his most holy word, 'and with a pure heart and humble voice, to ask 'those things which are requisite and necessary, 'as well for the body as the soul.'

With regard to the *origin* of these united acts of *confession*, *praise*, and *prayer*, I have already expressed my belief, that they spring from divine and positive institution, that is, in one word, from *revelation*. Others would ascribe their origin to what they are pleased to call *moral* obligation; and hesitate not to say, that *worship* is one of the first principles of *that*, which owes all *its principles*, and *its* very *origin* to *human conceit*, namely, NATURAL RELIGION. I abstain from any thing like controversy, however, as to this same *religion of nature*, afraid lest what I have already advanced may be construed by its numerous patrons, into a sort of *theological treason*; and shall content myself with asking a few questions, which being *modestly* put, and *naturally* arising in the inquisitive mind, may be deemed not wholly unworthy of attention. 'What is *natural religion*? If not the offspring of human fancy, what other parent will stand forth and claim it as his progeny? nay, be its origin what it may, what does natural religion teach that is worthy of regard from fallen man? How have its doctrines been handed down inviolate to this distant age? What effects has it produced in the world, particularly among its own immediate votaries? In fine, can natu-

ral religion be implicitly relied on, for the eter
salvation of the man who embraces it?' There a
questions which, on the part of *revealed religion*, a
easy of solution, but which, on the part of the hig
ly extolled *religion of nature*, have never met, s
far as I have had access to know, with any satisfa
tory solution. I am therefore clearly of opinion, tha
no heed ought to be given to any such '*tradition*
'*man*,' for these substantial reasons, that by mean
of it 'the word of God is often rendered of non
'effect;' and that as Christians we have nothing a
all to do with it.

In the immediate instance now before us, I can
not see how the origin of divine worship can, when
ascribed to natural religion, be possibly supported.
If the '*offerings*'[1] which, we are informed by the
oldest writer extant, '*were brought unto Jehovah*,' by
the first race of mankind, shall be acknowledged
(as in my estimation, they ought to be acknow-
ledged) to have been '*brought*' for the purpose of
divine worship, in the full extent of the term, it will
be no easy matter to shew, how the *internal feel-
ings* of *moral obligation* could of themselves have
put man upon such a strange, and seemingly inade-
quate kind of homage. Nay, when we reflect, that
long posterior to the *acceptable offering* of Abel,
when Jehovah himself did institute a solemn form
of worship among the people he had chosen, he
adopted

[1] Genesis iv. 3, 4, 5.

adopted this very method of *sacrificature*, we may fairly conclude that he himself had been the author of that method, and consequently that those who, with me, ascribe the *origin* of *divine worship* to *revelation solely*, are in the right.

I am ready to confess, that in the confined view in which divine worship is, for the most part, beheld, as a grateful acknowledgement of our dependence, for preservation and protection, on Almighty God, the votaries of natural religion have something like a pretext for their creed; since, in this confined acceptation, '*worship*' may at first sight, seem 'NATURAL.' Upon a more minute examination, however, difficulties will arise which have not been provided against. It will be asked, to what place were the material acknowledgements of Cain and Abel *brought?* To whom were they, when brought, delivered? To Jehovah in person? or to any one deputed by him to receive them? All these circumstantials of instituted worship we find Jehovah ordaining in his subsequent establishment; and do therefore judge, that they were ordained by him, at the same time that he directed the 'first-'lings of Abel's flock' to be brought unto him.

But on the confined footing of moral origin, the case of worship is neither fully nor fairly stated, and as the case stands between God and man. On this footing, man is considered as a *rational* creature, I own, but not as a *fallen* creature. *Sin* is ex-

cluded, and therefore is there no aspect towards *atonement*. Here it is that the glaring defect becomes so very apparent; here it is that disrespect to the Christian scheme of salvation becomes so obvious; insomuch that by him who knows, that 'without shedding of blood there is no remission[1],' there can no truce be allowed with natural religion; for, 'What communion hath light with darkness? 'what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what 'part hath he that *believeth* with an *infidel*?'

There is another difference of sentiment, on this subject, among those who call themselves christians, which it becomes me to notice, for this reason, that it has led to more lamentable consequences, and has been productive of 'confusion and every evil work.' It respects the mode of *public worship*, how it ought to be performed—by an established form, or without such form; in other words, by a *precomposed* liturgy, or by the *uncomposed* and extemporaneous effusions of the moment. The united episcopal churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland, you know, maintain and practise the *precomposed liturgical* mode of divine worship; while the other mode is maintained and practised by the Scottish Establishment, and by that legion of schismatics, which exist in these realms, and which are classed under the general appellation of *Dissenters*. By this description of men a profusion of the most contemptuous

[1] Heb. xi. 22.

ous abuse has been thrown out against our eucharistical liturgy in particular, as 'a jumble of po-'pery,' as an 'ill-mumbled mass;' and against liturgies in general, as 'stinting the spirit of God,' as 'burying spiritual gifts,' 'as a cloak for ignorance 'and indolence,' and what not. Here we are presented with abundance of vulgar *raillery*, but not with one atom of sound and impartial *reason*. To such railing I answer nothing; to the reasons which may have excited it, my answer shall be as follows:

I readily admit, that if the Object whom both parties are eager to address, and from whom they expect a portion of those gifts and graces, for which their addresses are put up, were an object clothed with like passions and propensities with ourselves—an object susceptible of the emotions and influences incident to human nature, (say in the highest state of refinement), what are thought to be extemporaneous effusions would have much the advantage over every liturgical and precomposed form of prayer; or, if christian worship had nothing more in view than to inflame the passions, and furnish gratification to 'itching ears,' by the 'enticing words 'of man's wisdom,' by fluency of speech, and all the flights of ingenious oratory[1], the arbitrary freedom

[1] The editor cannot positively say, that the Club is now in existence, but he knows that the time was, when there did exist in a Scotch University,

dom of the conventicle is assuredly preferable, for these purposes, to the duly regulated '*form of sound* '*words*' which the church has adopted. But I would have it ever kept stedfastly in mind, that it is GOD, not MAN, to whom christian worship, in the three constituent parts of it, *confession*, *supplication*, and *praise*, is due, and for whose ears it is wholly intended; in which case it requires no fluency of expression, no display of human eloquence to recommend, and to adorn it. For, if ever the adage of the poet met with an appropriate application, it may certainly be said of christian worship, that it is,

"When unadorn'd—adorn'd the most."

A superiority of gifts and talents, being wholly *personal*, is no object either of dispute or of envy on the part of sound churchmen, since *they* have, what they esteem, *authority*, to compensate for any deficiency of this sort which can be laid to their charge. 'The lawfulness and expediency of *set* '*forms of prayer*' is a subject which has been frequently discussed, and proved to be agreeable both to right reason and to primitive practice. For my own part, I think the *necessity* for *set forms of prayer*, in the public worship of God, is a matter equally defensible. For however willing to concede this point, viz. that the private christian, in his

versity, not a hundred miles from the mouth of the Tay, a *praying club*, to which even ladies were admitted, to have their ears regaled with the *flow of soul*, without the *feast of reason*.

his secret addresses to the throne of grace, may express himself in such language, as his own pious thoughts, and the sense of his particular wants may at the time suggest; (though even here the humble and contrite heart has oft found great benefit from a precomposed form); yet, when it is considered that WORSHIP, in the full import of the term, is something not of *private*, but of *public* concern; something in which every one present is most deeply interested, not only upon his own individual account, but as a member of Christ's mystical body at large, it follows that, in this social character, he is in duty bound to offer up *his* prayers for his fellow members, and to share in *their* prayers for him. And hence it is that I am led to infer the *necessity*, as well as the *expediency*, of having the public service of the sanctuary so contrived, and so conducted, as that all who are present may bear a part; which, in fact, cannot be, without a previous knowledge of the whole—while this previous knowledge is not to be obtained without previous possession of '*the form of service*' about to be used. In this opinion I am confirmed by the following declaration of our blessed Saviour—'Where *two* of you shall *agree* (συμφωνησωσιν) IN 'VOICE, touching what ye ask, it shall be done 'to you'.[1] Does not this declaration imply, that even *two* disciples are required to pray in the *same form* of words? But if *two* are thus to pray, the urgency

[1] Matth. xviii. 19.

gency becomes a hundred fold greater where *two hundred* are assembled.

Without a liturgy, therefore, either written or committed to the memory of the whole audience, no such thing as *public worship*, strictly so called, can exist. I am aware that this seemingly bold assertion may startle many. But I am not, on that account, disposed to retract it; since the rejecters of a liturgical service make no account of either the expression or the nature of *public worship*. Indeed, with the exception of singing a few stanzas of the psalms, every part of their service is performed by the minister; and does, in truth, depend on the *personal* acquirements of this single individual, without so much as the concurrence of an *amen* from the people assembled: Insomuch that with them the usual expression, '*going to prayers*,' is exchanged for '*going to sermon*,' or, '*going to hear a preaching*;' which *sermon* or *preaching*, being addressed to *man*, is certainly no part of the *worship of God*, however necessary and instructive the sermon may be.

As to particular liturgies, if, after a candid examination, they shall be found in any way defective or erroneous in points of doctrine, let such defects be supplied, and such errors be rectified; or let a new liturgy be composed by those who have competent authority, in the church, for this undertaking, so that all be *intended*, and really '*done* for edification,'

'cation.' And though, in officiating by a liturgy, some may have the talent of fixing the attention, and even of exciting the devotion of the people more than others, yet is this no disparagement to the liturgy itself, since the same difference does daily occur among those who boast of their extemporary attainments; while the seriously disposed laity of both persuasions, though they could wish all such defects remedied in their pastors, will, on this trifling account, neither despise their respective modes of faith, nor desert their respective modes of practice.

There is a third subject of dispute to which the worship of God has given birth, viz. 'In what language it is to be performed.' On the very principles of common sense, one should think that this was a question which could admit of one only mode of solution. But as it is a question intimately connected with the topic to be discussed in the succeeding letter, I shall content myself with having simply alluded to it; and shall conclude the subject of '*public and social worship*,' with recommending it to the marked attention of the theological student; in the full hope, that when he comes to be invested with the ministerial character, he may be induced to enforce the attendance of the people committed to his charge on all the services of the holy sanctuary; not merely by representing the public worship of God as a *matter of duty*, but, particularly and eminently, as a *matter of distinguished honour*,

and as an *unspeakable blessing*. That such poor, and weak, and unworthy creatures, as we confessedly are, should, in our 'best estate,' which is 'altogether vanity,' be not merely permitted, but directly called upon, and, in a manner the most condescending and encouraging, invited to pour forth the voice of supplication before the throne of the Most High, for *all*, of which either as men, or as christians, we stand in need; and *that* too, with the most confident and well-grounded hope of success. What honour, what blessing is to be compared with this? especially when we reflect, that these privileges are not confined to single individuals, but do *collectively* belong to us, as a *body corporate*, as a *family*, as a conjunct *brotherhood*, 'storming heaven' (as some of the old Fathers express themselves) 'with the united artillery of prayer and praise;' or, in our Saviour's own language, '*taking it by force*'.[1]

How should we rejoice, if, in social life, our earthly superiors, in birth, in dignity, or in fortune, (who all the while are but 'as grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven'), should deign to treat us in the same gracious and condescending manner; should desire us, in all our straits and difficulties, to apply freely and familiarly to them, for such relief as they were both able and willing to afford, with this additional assurance,

[1] St Matth. xi. 12.

rance, that the oftener we did apply, we should always be made the more welcome! This parallel case needs only to be mentioned, to discover the infinitely stronger force of the application; and I shall forbear to enlarge upon it. I cannot however forbear from expressing a wish, an anxious wish, that, with all due caution, the idea of '*a blessing*' were extended to the whole of the christian's intercourse and connexion with his God and Saviour. I hope and trust, that I shall not be so far misunderstood, as to be accused of leaning, in the least degree, to the side of Antinomian libertinism, by saying, that even most of the practical instances of the *moral law* itself, are, in my judgment, appointed not so much with a view to the concerns of this life, or for any intrinsic virtue or merit in the things themselves, as by way of *blessing* to man, as preparing and qualifying him for being, in due time, a fit and happy member of that blessed society in heaven, where even at present 'our conversation is,' wherein our πολίτευμα—our *citizenship*, or *rights as burgesses*, are in store. In the common modes of religious exhortation, I cannot, on this principle, forbear from thinking, that while DUTY is a topic that cannot be too much, yet BLESSING may be too little insisted on. Self-experience must convince us, that there is, in human nature, an indifference, nay more, a backwardness, to the discharge of that which presents itself, in the bare, simple, unattractive form of DUTY. On the contrary, does any act of obe-

dience, of *general* or *individual* obligation, present itself in the alluring shape of *blessing*, that is to say, of honour and advantage? *To* the performance of that act we fly with alacrity, and *in* the performance are seldom chargeable with want of energy.

To the feelings and the candid confesssion of my readers, in all the different stages of life, I may and do appeal, in proof of this different mode of being affected, according as one and the same *active* or *passive* instance of their compliance with *civil* or *religious* obligation, comes recommended to them *as a matter of duty*, or *as a matter of blessing*. It is 'with cords of a man, with bands of love,' that God is pleased '*to draw*' sinners unto himself[1], and I have no doubt, that the ambassador for Christ, he who is empowered 'in Christ's stead, to pray 'men to be reconciled unto God,' would most effectually promote this '*reconciliation*,' and be the happy instrument of encouraging the necessary practice of real 'DUTY,' by carefully and cautiously infusing into the cup of ministerial exhortation the cordial mixture of 'BLESSING;' and thus removing or overcoming the unpalatable taste incident both to the faith and practice of true and undefiled religion. It is with this view only that I have digressed from my subject, to make these few observations. They would have admitted of much enlargement

[1] Hosea xi. 4.

largement: but brief as they are, they will furnish ample materials to the reflecting mind; and, with my readers possessed of such a blessing, I now leave them.

LETTER XXXVII.

HITHERTO, in discussing those branches of theological science which are held to be of chief and paramount regard in the christian church, I have merely referred to *Scripture*, as containing the revelation of God's will; it seems therefore expedient, that I should, before bringing these letters to a conclusion, devote a little of the reader's time and thought to an enquiry into the nature of that inspired record, which is of a truth the sure foundation of our faith, and the only source from which all saving knowledge ought to be, or indeed can be drawn.

By *Scripture* is understood the WORD OF GOD, written for man's learning at God's command, *written*

ten under the immediate direction of God's holy Spirit, *inspiring* chosen men at different times, and in continued succession, from MOSES to ST JOHN, and published and preserved by methods above the reach of human discovery, in order that the various *messages, communications, instructions, precepts, promises,* and *threatenings,* with which the great JEHOVAH ALEIM was pleased, from time to time, to favour the human race, might be handed down to the remotest ages, for the display of his *covenanted* love, and for the blessed purpose of training and educating man in the school of heavenly wisdom; and by this means, of fitting him for regaining the gracious end of his original creation. The 'volume 'of the book, in which it is thus written' both of the ALEIM and of the ALUE, both of the *Creator* and of the *Redeemer,* is known by the distinguishing name of 'THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT,' and is pre-eminently the object of the christian's esteem and regard—the OLD TESTAMENT, as being the ORIGINAL and AUTHENTIC RECORD; the NEW TESTAMENT, as being an AUTHORITATIVE APPEAL to *that* RECORD, and an AUTHORITATIVE APPLICATION of its contents, to the purposes for which they were written. These two constituent *parts* of the great WHOLE of revelation are received, by the church, with equal reverence, and upon strength of *evidence,* both *intrinsic* and *extrinsic,* the most irrefragable—the *former,* as embracing proof, the most convincing, of their divine inspiration, from the subjects of which they treat, and from the manner

ner in which those subjects are treated; the *latter*, as arising from prophecy accomplished, and from various testimonies bearing witness to their genuineness, and to the way and manner by which they have been handed down to us.

Thus it is by means of this happy conjunction of *Divine evidence* requiring, and of *human evidence* persuading, *consent*, that we believe scripture, in all points of *faith* and *practice*, to be sufficiently *perfect* in itself, to be generally *clear* in its construction, and to be, when promulgated, *universally binding* in its obligation; insomuch that no man is found among the *protestant* professors of christianity, who is not ready to affirm, in the words of the VIth article of the church, that 'whatsoever is 'not read in scripture, nor may be proved thereby, 'is not to be required of any man that it should be 'believed, as an article of faith, or be thought re-'quisite or necessary to salvation.' This is the ground, so sure in itself, and so suited to the dignity of scripture, on which those of the episcopal persuasion, not only build their separation from a church which, by its tyrannical impositions and traditions, had rendered the word of God of none effect, but on which they can justify their ecclesiastical constitution, in all its branches, against the objections of those who, although also separated from Romish *tyranny*, have contrived to reach the opposite extreme, (in which christian *liberty* degenerates into *licentiousness*), by putting the management of scripture

into improper hands; and by requiring from it more than it was designed to give, namely, the *ipsissima verba*, the *explicit laws* of ecclesiastical polity; whereas an apostle has summed up such laws in one *general* rule of observance—'*Let all things* '*be done* DECENTLY, AND IN ORDER[1].' Surely, if words have a meaning, these are words which admit of a power in the apostolic and catholic church, to regulate the *externals* and *circumstantials* of ecclesiastical discipline; while the *essentials* of faith, of worship, and of government, we profess ourselves bound and obliged to receive, as written for our learning, in the hallowed code of revelation; so that 'having on the *breast-plate of righteousness*,' and taking to us 'the *shield of faith*,' the '*helmet* '*of salvation*,' and 'the *sword of the Spirit*,' (which is declared to be the written 'WORD OF GOD'), we can, as a part, however small, of God's holy catholic and apostolic church, *defend* ourselves against any attack from the ONE church of the *Pope*, or from the MANY churches of the *people*.

Even Romanists themselves agree with us in this, that they acknowledge for scripture, all that we acknowledge, although, out of the plenitude of its power and infallibility, the Romish church has prevented our being completely 'of *one* mind,' even in this single instance. Thus the Council of Trent has taken upon it to enroll, upon the list of ca-

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

canonical Old-Testament scripture, thirteen or fourteen ancient, but spurious books, which we, for reasons about to be adduced, reject as '*apocry-phal*,' and uncertain; and which are only permitted to be 'read for example of life, and instruction 'of manners—but not to be applied to establish any 'doctrine'.' This addition to the divine code, which Romanists have made, upon no sort of warrantable ground, is without even an apparent view of public or private utility; unless it be a matter of utility to display their church's infallible right to make canonical scripture of any thing, and thereby make human *faith* spring out of human *fancy*.

But Romanists have gone some steps farther than this. They have sealed up from *general* access what they admit as *scripture*, by imposing the Vulgate Latin translation upon the whole church; for the Latin being no longer a living language, the bulk of the people have no opportunity afforded them of *reading*, of *marking*, *learning*, and *inwardly digesting*, the things which make for their eternal peace. Nay, as the natural consequence of such presumption, in the case of *scripture*, they have not been slack to treat the public service of the church in the same way, and have restricted the performance of it to their favourite language. I will not say that this is done with the intention of keeping the people in a state of ignorance; but this I will say, that

 the

[1] See 39 Articles—Art. VI.

the effect of it has been the keeping most of their people in that ignorance, which, it has become proverbial among them to say, is 'the mother of de-'votion.' This, it is well known, (and Romanists themselves have been forced to acknowledge as much), is a restriction neither authorised by divine institution, nor by apostolical usage; nay, it is a restriction confessedly contrary to the universal practice of the first, and of many succeeding ages of the christian church, during which the people had the free use of the scriptures, and the exercise of public worship, in the vernacular current language of every nation, to which the gospel was preached. When we enquire into the reasons of this strange and cruel innovation, we are gravely told, that there is a danger of abusing the scriptures, and no necessity for people's understanding their prayers. If we reply, that reasons so silly and frivolous as these, are, if possible, worse than the restriction in behalf of which they are pleaded; no other argument is brought forward than the great palladium of error, '*the absolute power of the church*' to determine and to enact whatever it pleases, without assigning any reason at all. How far this *absolute power* will be admitted by the great Head of the Church, as a sufficient apology for preventing 'the 'edification of his body,' I shall leave to be decided by the good sense of any sincere christian, who will bestow an attentive perusal on a portion of St Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians; where, among other convincing arguments against such pre-

cepts

cepts and practices as the church of Rome has adopted, the apostle declares, 'that he had rather in the 'church speak *five* words, with his understanding, 'that by his voice' (being *understood* certainly) 'he 'might *teach others also*, than *ten thousand words* in 'an UNKNOWN TONGUE[1].' It is also worthy of the consideration of those who are so strenuous in the rejection and condemnation of liturgical forms of prayer, whether there be not a striking similarity between the prayers which the Romish priest utters in an *unknown tongue*, and those *extemporary effusions* in which the others so much delight. In both, the part performed by the people is the same. In both, they are hearers of the *sound;* but in no respect, can they be discerners of the *sense*, much less humble petitioners themselves; though all the while the language of address runs in their names, but often runs so rapidly, that it is almost impossible to overtake its meaning. Such as adopt this mode of prayer and supplication may rail against *priestcraft* and *prelacy* as they please; but the reflecting mind is at no loss to see, that there is a *craft*, call it of *presbytery*, or what you will, in assuming powers which priest or prelate never possessed—*the powers of making the people*, in their addresses to the King of Heaven, *speak any language which they shall choose;* thus making their '*faith* to stand, not 'in the power of God, but IN THE WISDOM OF MEN.'

[1] See the whole admirable matter contained in the 14th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians.

It will no doubt be contended, that by thus applying the apostle's language, I would have it inferred, that they, who are restricted to the use of a written liturgical form of prayer, do not assume such powers; but do make the people's '*faith* to stand, not *in the wisdom of men*, but IN THE POWER OF GOD [1].' In as far as the united churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland, are concerned, I certainly do, without hesitation, admit the fact. '*The gospel of* '*Christ*,' asserts St Paul, 'is THE POWER OF GOD un-' to salvation [2].' The *liturgy* of these churches is formed, *verbatim*, out of the gospel of Christ, without the least 'slight of men, or cunning craftiness, 'whereby they lie in wait to deceive;' therefore does the '*faith*' of those, who pray to their God and Saviour in this 'form of sound words,' confessedly stand, as I have insinuated, not in 'the 'wisdom of men, but' literally 'in the power of 'God.'

But to return to the *Scriptures*, as being the more immediate subject of our present discussion. A charge of imperfection and obscurity is artfully preferred against them by the Romanist, in order that he may have an opportunity of inferring the necessity of an *infallible* guide and interpreter; and it is easy to see to whom he would assign this office, by his telling us, that, as it is *from* the *church* that we have the *scriptures*, so does the *authority of the*

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 5. [2] Rom. i. 16.

the scriptures depend upon the *authority of the church.* It will immediately occur to the well-informed reader, that there is, in this argument, a designed ambiguity of expression, arising from the *terms* being left undefined. Thus, if the word *church* be understood, in the most extensive sense, as embracing Christ, its glorious Head, and together with him, the several inspired writers, from Moses to the apostle St John, as office-bearers in his church, delegated by him to reveal, or make known the will of God to man, then am I ready to acknowledge, that *from* the church it is, that we receive the scriptures. But, if by the church is meant, as commonly is the case, a succession of *one church*, or of *many churches*, from the apostles down to the present period, I must withstand the Romish position, and simply say, that in this restricted sense, it is only *through* the church, (as a channel of conveyance), that we have the scriptures, not *from* the church, as the original source of such an invaluable donation.

In this view the Bible is, to all intents and purposes, like a charter of inheritance, granted, by a party competent, to such a man and his family, and preserved by succeeding generations of kindred, *through whose hands* it is carefully transmitted for the benefit of posterity, so long as the charter is valid. Hence it follows, that the strength of the *writ* lies in the *writ itself*. It flows, assuredly, from the inherent authority of the original granter; and all

all that the family, to whom the succesion is open, has to do, is to bear continued testimony to the genuineness and authenticity of the deed, *on which* their rights are founded; but *to which* they cannot pretend to add, nor *from which* attempt to diminish. It is thus that we receive our scriptures of the Old Testament, *through* the channel of the church of Israel, to which they were originally committed [1]. And it is on this footing, joined to some other partial objections, that we exclude from the list of inspired writings the *apocryphal books*, because they were never acknowledged as canonical scripture by the Jewish church. The case is the same with respect to the scriptures of the New Testament; about which happily there is now no difference of sentiment among christians of any denomination. We look upon the several churches which were at the first entrusted with the custody of these inspired writings, or to which any of these writings were addressed in the form of epistles, as so many guardians and trustees both for the public and their own private interest, not of course as authorised to determine and fix the doctrines and extent of obligation, which these scriptures contain, but simply as attesters of their genuineness and authenticity [2].

Indeed the connection between the *scriptures* and the *church* (in the common acceptation of the term) has

[1] Acts vii. 38. Rom. ix. 4.

[2] *Gal.* vi. 11. Colos. iv. 18. 1 Thess. v. 27. &c. &c.

has been so ably vindicated, and so completely freed from the erroneous representations of the church of Rome, that I need not farther enlarge on this part of the subject. I shall merely observe, that the distinction which I have laid down between the *authority* of a writing inherent in its very nature, and the *genuineness* of it deducible from extrinsic proof, is alone sufficient, in my apprehension, to clear up the doubtful doctrine entertained by some, who seem to think that 'the very first 'knowledge of what is scripture must come from 'the inward work of the holy Spirit upon our hearts.' Abating from the quaker-like principle, which has produced such an opinion, and from the enthusiastic form of expression which it bears, I would argue against the adoption of it, on the ground of its tendency to foster human pride, and to promote the following dangerous conceit, so greedily espoused by the avowed enemies of christianity, and, I am sorry to add, by many of its pretended friends, '*that the reason of man is the ultimate judge of that* '*which is* WORTHY *of God to reveal.*' This conceit, if admitted, and, when admitted, applied to the contents of the holy Bible, would speedily exhibit itself in plucking up, pulling down, and destroying the fair fabric of divine revelation; so that even the 'head-stone of the corner' would be once more 'disallowed by the disobedient,' and become itself 'a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence 'to them whose *reason* makes them already to 'stumble at the word.'

Symptoms

Symptoms of such uncharacteristic doubting and distrust have already displayed themselves in men, from whom better things might have been expected, who have laboured hard to *shew* (for to *prove* is beyond their power), that the scriptures of the Old Testament give no certain hope, scarcely indeed a faint prospect of a future state; and that all the promises and threatenings in these scriptures are confined to things temporal, and concern only the happiness or misery of the present life. Can a greater stigma be put upon any document, claiming the title of a revelation from heaven, than to suppose it defective, nay, altogether silent, in the great consummatory article of all religion, viz. the final issue of human life, whether *annihilation* or *eternal duration?* For, although such 'blind leaders of the blind' do admit (for the best possible reason, because it cannot be denied) that the *New Testament* (in their estimation, a code of doctrine and discipline wholly distinct from, and unconnected with the *Old)* has supplied every defect, and has expressly revealed a future state of reward and punishment; yet their hypothesis leaves the church, during the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, that is, from the calling of Abram to the advent of our Saviour, destitute of all hope of immortality, by reason of there being no such hope to be derived from the revelation vouchsafed to them. Yet St Paul is not afraid to tell his Roman converts, that 'whatsoever things were 'written aforetime were written for our learning; 'that

'that we, through patience, and *comfort of the* '*scriptures*, MIGHT HAVE HOPE[1]:' while our blessed Lord himself does expressly restrict the *hope*, which the Jewish church had from the scriptures of the Old Testament, to the hope of eternal life.—'Search the scriptures, for in them ye think 'YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE[2].' From such clear and incontrovertible premises, corroborated by our Saviour's explication of the title which, in the scriptures of the Old Testament, Almighty God assumes to himself—'I am the God of Abra-'ham[3],' &c. the church hesitates not to draw this natural conclusion, that 'both in the *Old* 'and *New* Testament everlasting life is offered 'to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator 'between God and man, being both God and man; 'and therefore they are not to be heard, which 'feign, *that the old fathers did look only for transitory* '*promises*[4].'

With respect to the alleged *obscurity* of scripture, I am, on the whole, so little disposed to resist the charge, that in common with every *humble* christian, I esteem the obscurity of some of its parts as an evidence of its high value, and of its divine authority. Let a man be once duly satisfied of the shallowness of his intellectual faculties, and their inability rightly to apprehend *terrestrial* objects; which

[1] Rom. xv. 4.
[2] St John v. 39.
[3] St Matt. xxii. 31, 32, 33.
[4] VIIth Article.

will cost him but small labour to discover, whether he turns his thoughts to the vicissitudes of nature, or to the 'changes and chances of this mortal life,' and he will require but few arguments to convince him, that the transcendent mysteries which Jehovah had to reveal concerning himself, in his *essence* and in his *attributes*, the œconomy of redemption, the necessity and nature of atonement by a God-man, and of sanctification by a divine Spirit, with all the concomitant or consequent discoveries of the great mystery of godliness, are *truths* which, did the language of revelation express them ever so accurately, *the finite understanding of man could not clearly or fully comprehend.* Nay, I feel warranted, from what we daily see or know of the untowardness of the human mind, to affirm, that, had the whole divine record been expressed in plain and universally intelligible terms—terms obvious to every capacity, and discoverable at a glance, the present complaint of *obscurity* would have been changed into expressions of *contempt;* and the scriptures would have been denounced as a mass of puerile invention, in which nothing was to be discovered but what was *attainable* by the light of nature, nothing which required that they should ever have been distinguished as a *revelation come from God.*

But let us for a moment examine the charge of obscurity a little more closely, and try if we can discover what ground there is for such a charge, and where

where the obscurity lies. It will, I hope, be granted, that there is no such thing to be found in the republic of letters, as a book of any description, the contents of which are equally intelligible to every one who opens it. Yet this obscurity is seldom ascribed to the book itself; it is more properly ascribed to diversity of talent and of application in the reader. The *Bible* is a book, the subject matter of which transcends that of every other book existing, and if ever the previous possession of those qualities of 'the wisdom that is from above,' namely, that we be '*without partiality, and without hypo-crisy*,' was necessary to any study, it is indispensibly necessary to the study of the Bible. Here lurks the secret cause of *biblical obscurity*. The man of genius, as he is termed—in other words, the 'self-willed and presumptuous,' treats the scriptures as Naaman of old treated the message of Elisha. He opens them and is *wroth*, because God's thoughts are not as his thoughts, because the *ways* of revelation are not the *ways* of revelation which a philosopher and metaphysician would have adopted. Well may we say to him—'My father, if the 'God of truth had inflated thy mind with some 'great swelling words of vanity, wouldst thou 'not have studied his word? how much rather 'then, when he saith to thee, Arise, and be bap-'tized, and *wash away* thy sins, calling on the name 'of the Lord?' The simple unprejudiced christian, he who, in the figurative language of an apostle, as 'a new-born babe desireth the sincere *milk of the*

'*word*, that he may be nourished thereby,' meets in the *word of God* with the desired satisfaction—the 'means of grace, and the hopes of glory' are completely accessible to him. He becomes apprized that it is his duty, and will be for his eternal advantage, to renounce what God forbids, to believe what he teaches, and to do what he commands; and this, joined to the knowledge that the *scriptures* alone are 'able to make him wise unto 'salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus,' is, to his devout mind, better than if it had even 'the gift of prophecy, and understood all myste-'ries;' the '*more excellent way of charity*' having been previously '*shewn*' to him, he '*believeth all* '*things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*' On the other hand, 'the disputer of this world,' the man more ambitious of literary fame than of religious edification, sits down to the study of the scriptures with no disposition to 'be converted, 'and become as a little child.' To 'inherit' *even the kingdom of heaven*, on these terms, would be, in his esteem, an act of self-degradation. Facts must therefore be investigated, although they even should be *facts* of God's revealing. He must, in all the pomp of philosophical induction, examine the modus, and analyse the properties of *divine essence* itself; and because his reason cannot tell him, how one God *can* be three Persons; how God *can* become man, be born and die; how the same identical body *can* be raised to life, after mouldering for a season in the grave, he first cries out against the obscurity

scurity of revelation, then discards it altogether; and professing himself to be *wise*, (εμωρανθησε), he becomes '*μωρος*'—an ideot, one *void of reason*, of such reason as thinks it no scorn, that *God be wiser than man!*

After all, should occasional obscurities occur to the humble-minded enquirer into revealed truth, there are other causes, to which such obscurities may and ought to be assigned, than the immediate imperfections of the original revelation. It is well known that authors of every description have suffered, and do suffer by translation; nor can it be supposed, without a miracle, but that the divine Author of the scriptures must thus have suffered. Let me not however be suspected of disparaging translations of the Bible, and least of all the English translation, which the church adopts. I mean only to put the reader in mind, that *translations* are *human* productions, as well as *commentaries* and *annotations;* and that, where obscurities do occur, it is more becoming the pious soul to impute these to *human* misconception, than to *divine* production. Even the Greek translation of the *Septuagint*, the oldest translation extant, may fairly be supposed, notwithstanding the high estimation in which it is holden by some, to be liable to imperfections and difficulties, both as the natural consequence of human weakness, and from the acknowledged insufficiency of other languages fully to express the force and intendment of the original Hebrew. I could exemplify

exemplify this in many instances; but shall merely recur to the fundamental instance, which has already been brought forward, the Old Testament designation of the Divine Essence, by the words 'JEHOVAH ELOHIM or ALEIM,' a designation, to denote which, no language that I am acquainted with, not even the *Greek*, though it be adopted by the inspired authors of the New Testament, (but least of all the *Latin*), possesses terms fully adequate; that is, capable of conveying the *whole meaning* of the original, as that meaning imports *relation* as well as *nature*; without attending to both of which we can form neither just conceptions of, nor a right faith in, HIM, whom our language most inadequately denominates 'GOD.'

From these causes, and others of *less* moment, though of *more* dangerous tendency, which could be mentioned, what wonder is it, that there should be thought to exist, nay even found to exist, difficulties, and perplexities in the volume of scripture? Not, I must insist, in that volume as *originally* delivered, but as now generally rendered and read; yet even these, I am bold to add, the scriptures, as now *rendered* and *read*, are abundantly able to remove or to explain, if they are only permitted to interpret themselves. Upon the whole, such is the veneration which the Episcopal Church of Scotland has ever shewn for the Holy Bible, even with all the defects incident to translation, that, in common with the venerable church of England, it has

has always esteemed the public reading of the sacred books to be a most necessary and most beneficial part of worship, and does not fail to recommend to the people the private reading of these books, without prejudice and partiality, as the primary means of religious edification—being stedfastly of the apostle's mind, that 'all *scripture* is given by 'inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, 'for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righte-'ousness, that the man of God may be perfect, 'throughly furnished unto all good works[1].'

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

HAVING now, to the best of my ability, given the biblical and theological student such a view of the sacred volume, and of the leading truths which its inspired authors were commissioned to reveal, as may, in the further prosecution of his studies, afford him the means of detecting error, it remains only that I should say something of a subject, partly *doctrinal*, and partly *practical*—I mean the *obedience which christians owe to the civil magistrate*. Viewing this important article *abstractedly*, we have the authority of scripture, *clear* and *determinate*, that 'every soul be subject to the higher powers,' that 'all power is ordained of God,' and that 'subjection should be, not only for wrath, but also for 'conscience-sake[1].'

Indeed, so very plain and urgent is the language of scripture on this head, and the doctrine itself of such necessary observance, for the *being* and the *well-*

[1] See Rom. xiii. 1—8. 1 St Peter ii. 13—17. and many other places where such obedience is enforced both by argument, and by positive command.

well-being of society, in whatever view we take it, that all christians professing themselves protestants have, in their public declarations of faith, almost unanimously agreed in the point of *doctrine*, however much they may have differed from each other, nay even from themselves, in point of *practice*. The first Scottish reformed 'Confession of Faith,' anno 1560, is abundantly copious as to this article—'Acknowledging em-'pires, kingdoms, dominions, titles, and the pow-'ers and authorities in the same, to be God's holy 'ordinance; so that whosoever goeth about to take 'away, or to confound the holy state of civil po-'licies, now long established, are not only enemies 'to mankind, but do also wickedly fight against 'God's express will;' affirming also, 'that such as 'resist the supreme powers, doing that which ap-'pertaineth to their charge, do resist God's ordi-'nance, and therefore cannot be guiltless[1], &c.

Even the *covenanted* assembly of Westminster, anno 1643, does confess, 'that God the supreme 'Lord, and King of all the world, hath ordained 'civil magistrates to be, under him, *over* the peo-'ple, for his own glory, and the public good:' and it declares 'the duty of the people' to be, 'to 'pray for magistrates, to honour their persons, to 'pay them tribute, and other dues, and to obey 'their lawful commands, and to be subject to their 'authority for conscience-sake; since neither in-

 fidelity,

[1] See Confession, &c. 1560, ch. xxiv.

'fidelity, nor difference in religion, makes void 'the magistrates just and legal authority, nor frees 'the people from their due obedience unto him[1].' I have adduced these two confessions, not in confirmation of scripture, which is a privilege I dare not allow to any *councils*—provincial, national, or general. I adduce them merely to shew how distinct and decisive scripture authority must, at these periods, have been thought, upon the obedience due to the civil magistrate, when it could have forced such declarations from the mouths and pens of those who were either acting, or intending to act, in direct opposition to their declarations.

Such anomalies have of late years taken place in the science of government, and the *rights* of princes, and the *rights* of insurgents and rebels, have been made not only so much matter of literary discussion, but so much matter of bloody warfare, that 'the still small voice' of divine revelation, the only voice which now-a-days speaks peace to man, is overborne by floods of obloquy and contempt, and by 'the oppositions of science falsely so called.' Indeed the torrid and frigid zones are not so far asunder, as are the doctrines of revelation, and the doctrines of revolutionists, on the highly important subject—'The Origin of Government:' The former say expressly, that 'all power,' whether in its *origin*, its *object*, or its *end*, 'is of God;' the latter say,

[1] See Confess. West. 1643, ch. xxiii.

say, that 'all power,' in the same indefinite language, 'is of the people.' This popular whim, this visionary dogma, which, riding in the whirlwind of insurrection, *has torn*, or *will*, sooner or later, *tear* from the roots every well regulated European state, the church and churchmen of Christ do most cordially detest and abhor. It is 'the '*abomination of desolation*' revived; at the sight of which, the peaceful christian, the loyal subject for conscience-sake, must obey his Saviour's command, and 'flee unto the mountains,' rather than, by giving the revolutionary *demagogue* 'the right hand 'of fellowship,' make the world believe, that there does, or can exist any 'concord between Christ 'and Belial,' any 'communion between light and 'darkness.'

It has been alleged, that when we rightly ascribe the origin of government to the King of heaven, there do arise doubts and difficulties even in this, the scriptural scheme of civil polity. But my principles induce me to believe, that these doubts and difficulties have their origin rather in hypothetical cases, artfully superinduced upon the scriptural scheme of civil polity, than generated by it. One thing is certain, that scripture requires *obedience* to civil rulers, and condemns, in express terms, the doctrine of *resistance*. This is scriptural, and therefore *divine doctrine*. If we wish to see it reduced to *practice*, we have only to consult the ecclesiastical history of the first three centuries. From this authentic record, we shall find, that under the re-

peated persecution of three hundred years, the first christians never swerved from *practising* what, in this instance, the *precepts* of their holy religion enjoined. Their natural feelings were as much alive to oppression, as are the feelings of this untoward generation of men; and their hourly increasing numbers certainly afforded them means of resistance, had they not been precluded from employing them. But to the *former*, they in no one instance gave way; and the *latter*, even with arms in their hands, they never once thought of turning against their persecutors. *Principle* silenced *feeling*, and *conscience* outweighed *numbers*. While so highly was primitive example distinguished, that the doctrines which promoted it were characterized in other language than that usually employed to denote the submission of subjects; and the terms, 'PASSIVE OBEDIENCE,' and 'NON-RESISTANCE,' were invented to express, in our language, the implicit respect to the '*powers that be*,' with which the first christians were animated.

Yet, notwithstanding the authority, no less than *divine*, of which it has to boast, the doctrine of *passive obedience*, like the doctrines of *original sin*, and of *imputed righteousness*, has been exploded; more, I would sometimes fondly think, from some fancied impropriety in the terms, than from any error which has been, or can be discovered, *on christian principles*, in the doctrine. But however much the *political* critic may amuse himself with the apparently

parently inapplicable conjunction of the epithet *passive* with the term *obedience*, which simply means 'one's calmly *obeying*, where he honestly can *obey*; 'and patiently suffering where he honestly cannot 'obey,' yet there lies not the same *grammatical* objection to the term '*non-resistance*.' By *non-resistance*, under the iron rule of a *despot*, we may lose our property; we may lose our preferment; we may lose our very lives. But, by *resistance*, should the despot[1] also prove a tyrant, we 'lose' something of greater consequence than even 'the whole 'world,' we lose our own souls; for the spirit of God hath explicitly declared, that 'they that *resist* 'shall receive to themselves damnation[2].' The scripture no where forbids, or ever disapproves of '*non-resistance*,' even when carried to the extremity of forbearance[3].' But the scripture, as you well know, peremptorily prohibits '*resistance*,' and that, in such general terms, as leaves no room for evasion, or mental reservation, upon any account, or under any interpretation whatever.

Nevertheless a question has arisen in the minds of some people, who are, as in duty bound, disposed

[1] I cannot well imagine how the term '*despot*' should have ever been understood in the sense which it presently bears. 'The *Lord* who 'bought them,' (2 Peter ii. 1), is in the Greek language 'αγορασαντα 'αυτους δεσποτην'—the DESPOT who bought them. Yet says our Lord, 'My yoke is easy, and my burden light.' Christians should beware of abusing any *name* which (see Jude 4. in the original) is ascribed 'μονω Θεω—to *God alone*.

[2] Rom. xiii. 2. [3] St Matth. v. 39—42.

ed to embrace the doctrine of scripture, and who are convinced of the perspicuity which, on this point, scripture exhibits; to whom it is that 'passive obedience, and non-resistance,' on the christian's part is due; and by what means it is, that the authority which claims our 'passive obedience and 'non-resistance,' is either originally obtained, or successively conveyed? These are topics however on which *scripture is wholly silent*. *Scripture* speaks indeed of 'God's anointed:' It speaks of 'Cæsar,' of the 'powers that be,' of the 'higher powers,' of 'rulers,' as 'the ministers of God to us for good,' of 'kings, and all in authority,' of 'the king as supreme,' and of 'governors sent by him.' Nay, scripture describes the nature of the kingly office, and the extent of our social and political duties. But scripture gives no mark of distinction to ascertain, in any case of disputed succession, *him*, whom the King of Kings and Lord of Lords recognizes; and seems to me to leave the ascertaining of *this* to some human method of discovery. Nor is primitive example more likely to solve our doubts on this point; since primitive example is wholly irrelevant to the decision of questions, which have arisen from the manifold changes and chances to which, in these latter days, 'thrones, dominions, 'principalities and powers,' have been, and are yet daily subjected.

It is no part of my present design to enlarge on this topic, much less to adduce the history of our church

church, and the public and private sufferings of its clergy, in times past, in proof of what may be endured, in this respect, for conscience-sake. It seemed good to a wise unerring providence, when 'temptation' to renounce their allegiance was thrown in the way of the bishops and clergy of the established episcopal church of Scotland, to give them grace to withstand it; and, 'with the temptation also, to 'make a *way*,' for them, 'to escape' the utter extinction of their order. It becomes us, then, who have succeeded, or whose ambition it is, in due time, to succeed to the truly honourable office of 'minis-'tring,' as they did, 'in holy things,' to bless God, for having permitted his church, in this nation, to be 'persecuted, but *not* forsaken,' 'cast down, 'but *not* destroyed;' and, for our own parts, to shew, by every word and action of our lives, that 'we look *not* at the things which *are seen*, but at 'the things which are *not seen*; for the things 'which *are seen* are *temporal*, but the things which 'are *not seen* are *eternal*.'

I cannot well conclude the subject in hand, without discussing the nature of that connection with the *state*, which *has* so long *subsisted*; and, where the *state* is a christian *state* and supports the church, which *ought to subsist* between the *church* and the *state*. Unquestionably the church of Rome has gone lengths, immoderately far beyond the lengths which it had the least shadow of right to go, in exempting what Romanists are pleased to call the *church*, that

that is, *clerical persons of all ranks*, from any subjection to the civil magistrate; and, in making *degradation*, which is with this *church*, in this restricted sense, a punishment merely optional, an adequate punishment for any crime, however atrocious, which persons in the priesthood could commit. Nor is this all; for the same church expressly prohibits the laity of its communion from obeying the civil magistrate, if he shall interfere in the least with the provisions of the ecclesiastical law. Nay, what crowns the Romanist's system of blind presumption, the Pope is held to possess the power of deposing kings at pleasure, of absolving subjects from their allegiance, and of modelling governments after any form or forms which he shall think expedient. These antisocial, and highly uncharacteristic claims, the Romish church is itself aware, are no part of the authority which it can be said to derive from Christ, who never authorised such claims, nor from St Peter, who never pretended to them; and I flatter myself that, with men of discernment, they require no other refutation than simply to be mentioned. The fallacy, under which they are imposed, is of the most impudent and absurd description; and the *nature* of the doctrines, when imposed, of the most pernicious, nay ruinous tendency.

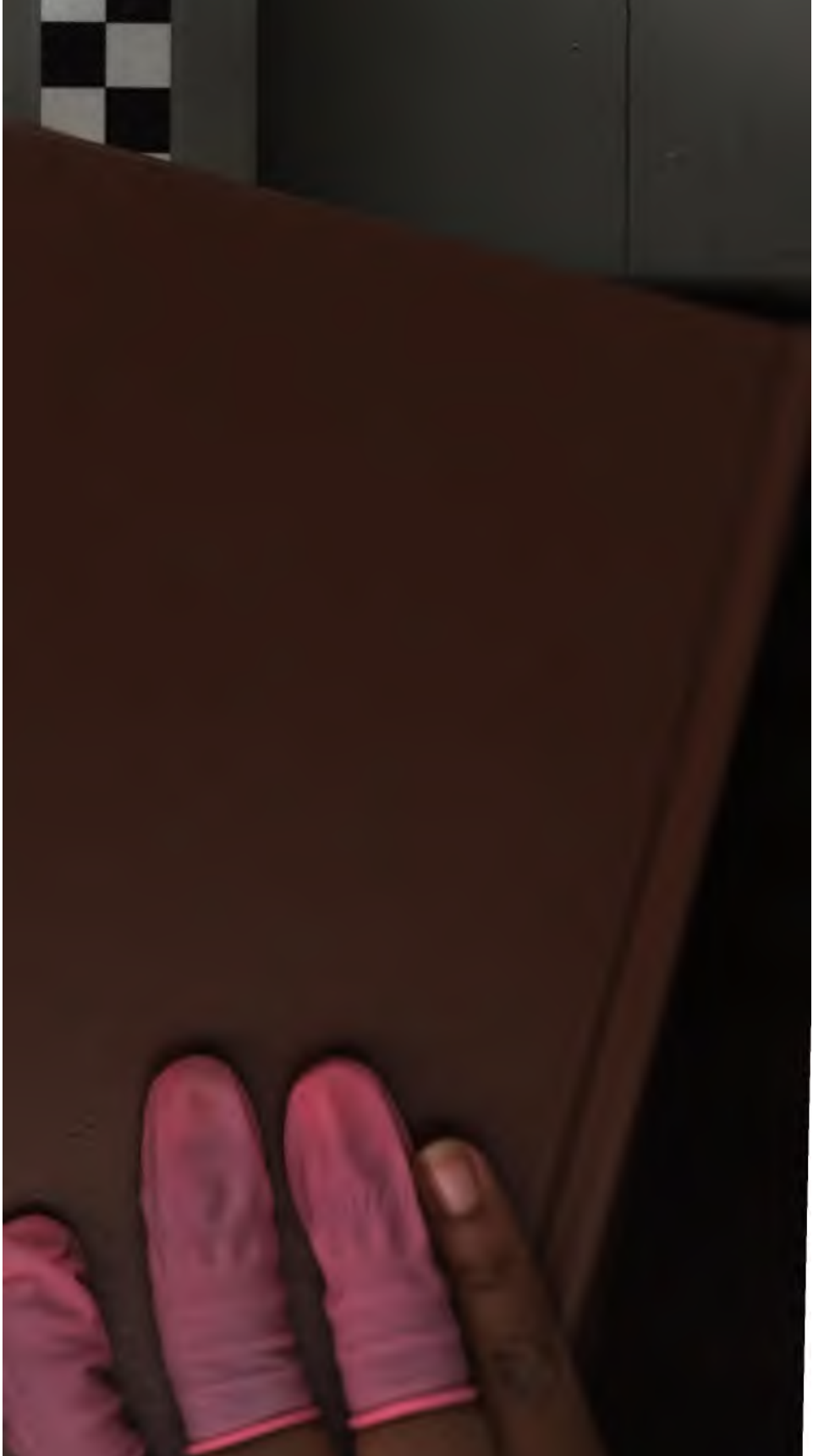
The church of England, on the other hand, the first, regularly episcopal, church of the reformation, and hence well denominated its '*bulwark*,' has been, by a host of sectarian enemies, accused of teaching doc-

doctrines of a very opposite tendency indeed—doctrines which, it is alleged, would sink the church, not *in*, but *beneath the state*, by clothing the British monarch with the pompous title of '*Head of the* '*church*. Would such ignorant and railing accusers consult the period of British history, when this title was first given, they would see the folly of inveighing against the church of England on this ground, because those, who first bestowed this invidious appellation, still *retained their adherence to the Pope*, and avowed their acknowledgement of his supremacy; and, would these objectors now consult the 'articles of religion,' and 'the declarations' of the sovereigns of these realms, they would find that the title, 'Head of the Church,' has been long since dropped; and that the 'king's majesty' lays claim to no other prerogative, as 'supreme governor of 'the church within his dominions,' than that of 'ruling all estates and degrees committed to his 'charge by God, and of restraining, with the *civil* '*sword*, the *stubborn and evil doers*' of every description, clergymen, as well as laymen.

At its last legal settlement, in 1661, the episcopal church of Scotland was laid under several disagreeable restrictions, chiefly owing to the misconduct of those numerous usurpers of the clerical office, who had started up at that troublesome period; and accordingly these restrictions were enforced or withdrawn as times and circumstances required. But, on the parliamentary abolition of that legal

settlement, about one hundred and twenty years ago, the bond of connexion which before subsisted between the church and state, in this part of the kingdom, was dissolved; and the episcopal church of Scotland has thereby reverted to the original foundation of the church catholic; on which foundation, uncherished and unprotected, but now happily tolerated, by the state, it humbly reposes, confiding in the support and protection of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls; whose *spiritual* commission, and *spiritual* authority, it has (and may it ever have) the honour to bear—being a commission and authority not derived from the secular power, and therefore not to be extinguished or transferred by that power. At the same time, I, for my own part, and I believe I speak the language of my spiritual Fathers and brethren at large, do most steadily and sincerely acknowledge myself to be, as a good and loyal subject, *bound* in conscience by the laws of the realm, and *amenable* to the cognizance of the *state*, in my *clerical* capacity, as far as the good of society and the preservation of the public morals are concerned—even to the length of being, in all such cases, '*passively obedient* and *non-resisting*:' since, in my firm and unalterable belief, '*passive* '*obedience* and *non-resistance*,' although 'not many 'wise men, after the flesh, not many mighty, not 'many noble,' are of my belief, is the *never to be relinquished* doctrine of scripture, and the surest cement of social order. It is therefore the doctrine, of all others most becoming the ambassador for Christ, when

when *social order* (as a part of 'the counsel of God,' which he is bound to 'declare' unto the people) is required to be discussed by him, whether in public or in private: and for this reason have I not *shunned*, notwithstanding the obloquy which many have attached to it, to declare it to those to whom these letters are addressed; in a humble hope, that as it has ever been, so it will ever be, the avowed doctrine of every sound and zealous churchman in this part of the united kingdom.

These being the sentiments from which, in my apprehension, no real christian ought ever to swerve, in as far as regards the constitution of the state, it is hardly necessary for me to say, that the same sentiments ought to be cherished by all christians, laity as well as clergy, in as far as the constitution of the church is concerned; and to all that extent of obedience and submission to which this precept of an apostle reaches—'Obey them that have the 'rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they 'watch for your souls, as they that must give ac-'count; that they may do it with joy, and not 'with grief: for that is unprofitable unto you[1].' Not that from this superior privilege conferred on the spiritual ruler, we are to infer his being possessed of power and jurisdiction '*in ordine ad spiritu-'alia*,' that grand fallacy of the Romish church, by which all civil authority is swallowed up in the

[1] Heb. xiii. 17.